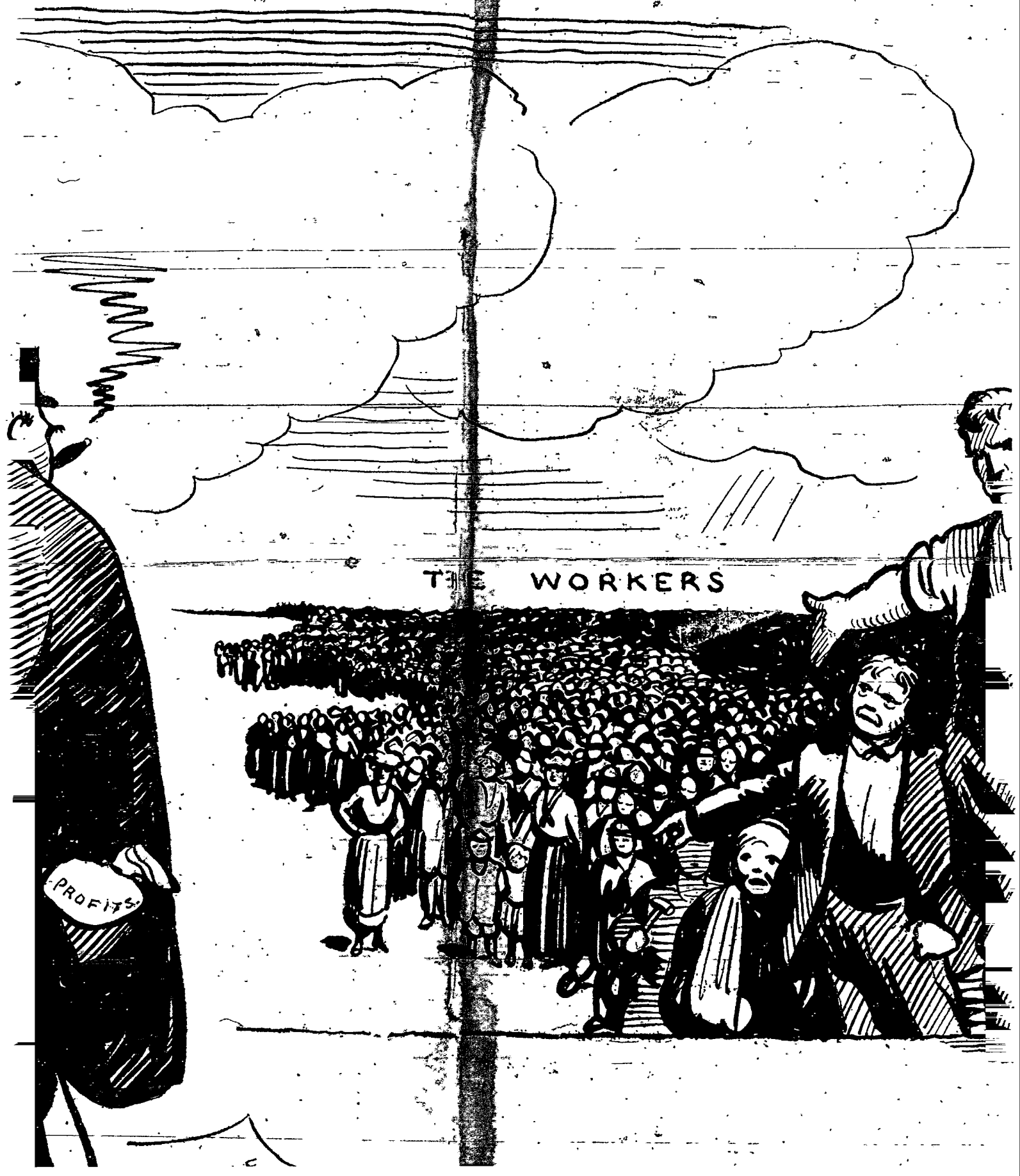
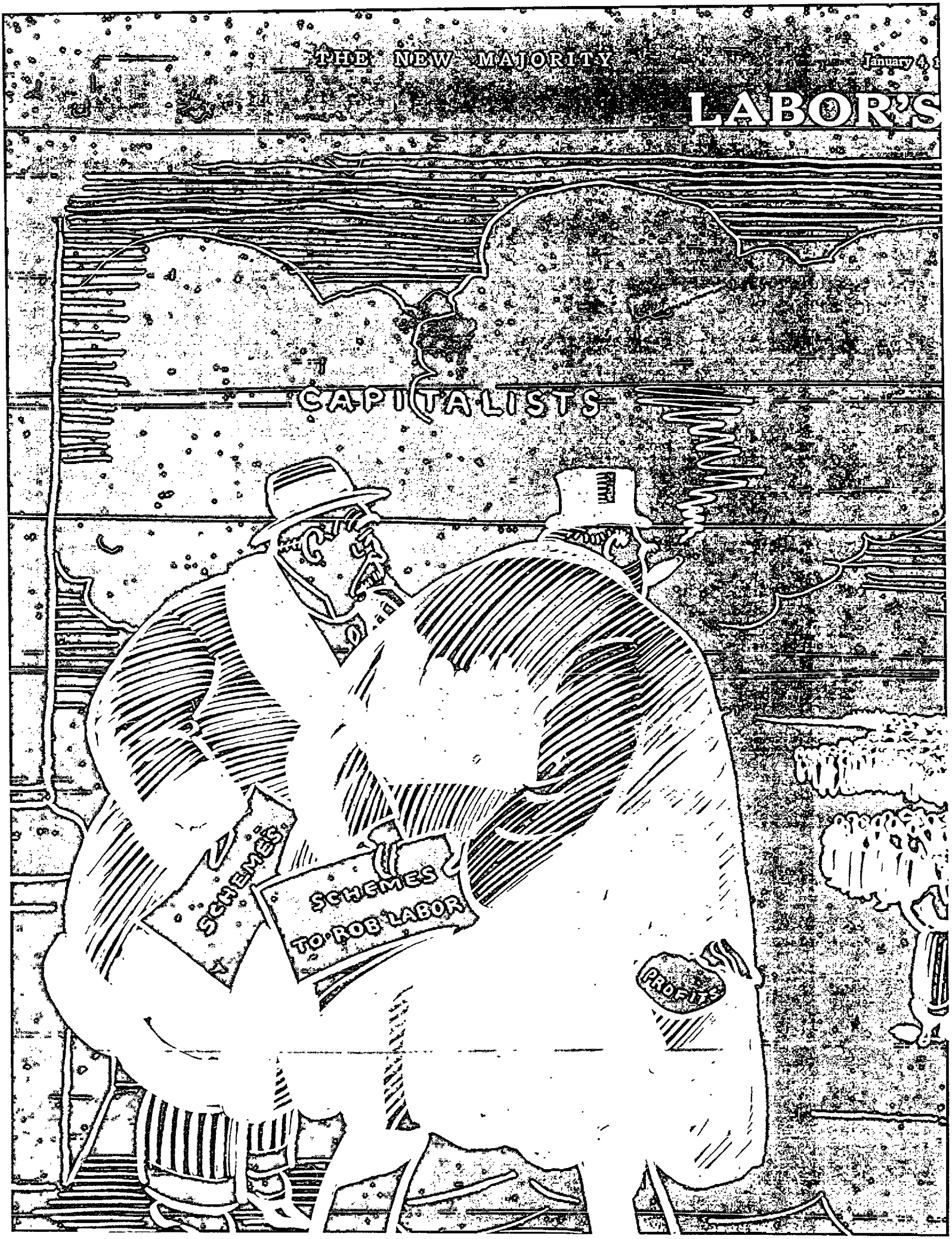
January 4, 1919

LABOR'S NEW PARTY

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The following figures illustrate the value of trade union action:

Blacksmiths—Government, minimum, $900; maximum, $1,000; non-union establishments, minimum, $1,252; maximum, $1,817; union establishments, minimum, $1,602; maximum, $1,716.

Plumbers—Government, minimum, $720; maximum, $1,565; non-union establishments, minimum, $936; maximum, $1,486; union establishments, minimum, $1,716; maximum, $2,288.

CUT THIS OUT AND POST IT!

All trade unionists, friends and well-wishers of the newly formed Labor Party are earnestly requested to refrain from signing any petitions of old party candidates, as to do so will invalidate your right to sign petitions for candidates of the Labor Party, who must go on the ticket by petition.

You are further requested to refrain from voting at the coming primaries as participation by vote at the coming primary will also invalidate your right to sign petition for candidates of the Labor Party.

SAVE YOUR SIGNATURE *for the* LABOR PARTY CANDIDATES.

Very truly yours,

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE *of*
Cook County Labor Party,

CHARLES DOLD, *Chairman*

WE'LL GET FINE HEAD FOR SCHOOL SYSTEM

Jake Loeb Appoints Big Business Committee To Recommend a New Superintendent of Education

Jake Loeb, always on the job for big business, has "pulled another stunt" for the powers that rule the schools.

A new superintendent of schools is going to be elected and Jake appointed a "committee of citizens" to investigate and recommend to the board of education a man for the job. Jake is again president of the school board.

Instead of appointing a committee that gives parents of the majority of the school kids a chance, here is what he did. He appointed two bankers, a State street department store manager, an active member of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and its subsidiary, the Public School League, a surgeon, and two lawyers. To "get" the clubwomen of the town he added a woman social worker and to "throw a sop" to labor he added a labor union official to stand alone in a committee of nine.

Personnel of the Committee

Following is the personnel of the committee Jake asks to pick a school superintendent to dictate how Chicago's workingmen's children shall be educated:

C. L. Hutchinson, vice president of the Corn Exchange National Bank and director of the Northern Trust Company.

David R. Lewis, vice president of the Continental Commercial National Bank.

Dennis F. Kelly, manager of Mandel Brothers.

Dorr E. Felt of the Felt & Tarrant Manufacturing Company, the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and the Public School League.

Edgar A. Bancroft, attorney for the International Harvester Company.

Clarence S. Darrow, lawyer.

Isaac A. Abt, surgeon.

Mary Margaret Bartelme, public guardian of Cook County and Juvenile Court officer.

Thomas E. Burke, general secretary and treasurer of the Steamfitters' and Plumbers' Union.

Public Education Association Ignored

Workers should remember that when the school fight was hottest in 1916, Allen Pond, Mary MacDowell, George H. Mead and other civic workers organized the Public Education Association, which tried to do a real job in making Chicago think clearly about its school problems.

For the purpose of nullifying the work of this organization, the Illinois Manufacturers' Association organized the Public School League, which started bitterly at once to fight the Chicago Teachers' Federation.

Jake Loeb carefully avoided appointing anyone from the Public Education Association on his committee, just as he carefully avoided giving labor a look-in on the committee. He did, however, appoint Dorr E. Felt of the Public School League.

Men Will Write Pamphlets

Mr. Felt wrote a pamphlet a few months ago entitled "Organized Charities and Social Welfare Work from the Viewpoint of an Employer," which may give some indication of the kind of a superintendent he will pick for Franklin conferred on it by his wise teaching if our present so-called child labor laws had been in force when he was a child, so as to have prevented his going to work at a very early age. Doubtless it has never occurred to you that the present so-called child labor laws may have been a potent factor in bringing about the present deplorable prevalence of boy bandits.

"In reality these professional uplifters do a great deal of harm. They help the labor unions to ride roughshod over the rights of other classes, the most of whom are quite as poor and deserving as the members of that class so much feared and favored by those who make and administer our laws that the cost of living even before the war was soaring almost out of sight of those in moderate circumstances who have not been favored by class legislation promoted by organized labor, which is organized and sustained almost altogether by violence. What a deplorable example it affords our youth to observe the power exercised by slugging labor leaders, who flourish and fill our newspapers with accounts of their exploits until their careers are cut short by some too rash act, or, as is often the case, the bullet of some rival friend of the oppressed workingman.

Denounces Union Teachers

"Doubtless another factor contributing largely to boy criminals is the association of school teachers in Chicago whose leader one night last winter, while addressing six or seven hundred teachers, boasted of the progress already made by the teachers of her association in instilling ideas of radical socialism and disrespect for employers into the minds of their pupils.

"From the same platform with Professor Scott Nearing, she boasted of the political power and influence on legislation she exercises in this state, telling how she had at times, by sham, trickery and deception, used all the school children to make public sentiment and influence voting; at the same time declaring that she is 'fighting the school board' and for the same ideas as that malodorous anarchist, and declaring that Dr. Harper was 'no educator.'

"It is a wonder that such things are permitted to go on. And the shame of it all is that these vicious women are taken up and encouraged by rich women who ought to know better. Perhaps those society women think they are actuated by good emotions but really they are actuated more by a desire to get in the limelight and pose as benefactors and leaders."

LABOR PARTY CITY PLATFORM

(Continued from page 7)

It stands for a unified local government in which all legislative power will be vested in the City Council and all administrative power in the mayor and his appointees. The Sanitary District, Board of County Commissioners, various park boards and other local governing bodies should be abolished and their powers entrusted to the City Council and the administrative officers of the city government. It is of fundamental importance that the people always retain control of the Mayor and the City Council through the initiative, referendum and recall. The Labor Party will support such state legislation as will be required

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General Strike or Boyc by Union Men F the Cou

By A. JOHA

Representative of Carpente Chicago at the Mc

The action of Gov. Ste failing to give Thomas J pardon and thereby affo for a new trial on one of dictments, has met with nation all over the world the United States.

A national congress of held at Chicago on Janu a. m., in the North Side T Clark street, for the pu campaign and crystallizin manner calculated to ob ants, Mooney and Billings

The Mooney case has be public discussion through any other known labor c knowledge that the peo country are convinced th ings are the victims of a and outrageous frame-up.

Frame-Up in Mc

As recently as Novembe in public what is known a port. J. B. Densmore, dire ernment employment agen from Secretary of Labor W a secret investigation of Chas. M. Fickert, of San official conduct, not only i but in many other crim under his jurisdiction. In it stated that innocent tra liberately framed and conv of corporate interests wh are permitted to escape for tions.

The January 14 conventi of delegates from bona fide ed with the American Fe From the credentials rece that the convention will b all industries and geograph have labor men and wome country.

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Frank P. Walsh is on the an address the second day and it is likely that the Hon. ran, of New York, the famo sel, who defended Thomas dress the convention.

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Mr. Felt wrote a pamphlet a few months ago entitled "Organized Charities and Social Welfare Work from the Viewpoint of an Employer," which may give some indication of the kind of a superintendent he will pick for Chicago schools. Some of the interesting paragraphs from his pamphlet are as follows:

"In most cases abject poverty is due to mismanagement, drink and frivolous expenditures. A hundred times more squalor is due to the faults of the sufferers than to the faults of those more enterprising and provident, whom the professional uplifters are always scolding in the newspapers and from the rostrum.

Felt's Views on Child Labor

"I have often wondered if mankind would ever reaped the benefits which Benjamin to ride roughshod over the rights of other classes, the most of whom are quite as poor and deserving as the members of that class so much feared and favored by those who make and administer our laws that the cost of living even before the war was soaring almost out of sight of those in moderate circumstances who have not been favored by class legislation promoted by organized labor, which is organized and sustained almost altogether by violence. What a deplorable example it affords our youth to observe the power exercised by slugging labor leaders, who flourish and fill our newspapers with accounts of their exploits until their careers are cut short by some too rash act, or, as is often the case, the bullet of some rival friend of the oppressed workingman.

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The Labor Party is determined to secure the enactment of every measure in the above program, but that is not its final goal. The party will stand for every measure which will promote the welfare of the workers and bring us nearer to complete democracy. The Labor Party will strive to elect all officials and to secure all legislation that is necessary to put its entire program into effect. The campaign thus begun shall not end until Chicago is politically and industrially free.

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THE NEW MAJORITY

Vol. 1, No. 1 CHICAGO, JANUARY 4, 1919 Five Cents a Copy

THE NEW MAJORITY

A new party and a new paper have been called into being by the Chicago Federation of Labor for the great mass of the workers. The new party, the Labor Party, which held its first convention last Sunday perfected a temporary organization and adopted a local platform, undertook with shouts of enthusiasm to assemble into a new majority, the men and women who toil, but who have been scattered as helpless minorities in the old parties under the leadership of the confidence men of big business.

The New Majority, with the same cheerful determination attempts in behalf of the Labor Party and of the workers generally, the task that should be performed by the great newspapers that have betrayed the City of Chicago.

Here, as in every other community, the great majority is composed of the men and women who, with hand and brain perform the useful work of the world—skilled tradesmen, clerks, teachers, laborers, busy mothers, workers in the professions. These are entitled to control public affairs and in order that they may do so they are entitled also to free and fair interchange of information and opinions and to correct and unbiased reports of the news of current events. This service should be performed by the public press, which has no other valid excuse for existence.

Instead of these—the great majority—being permitted to rule in this city and land of the free, the government is controlled by a minority—the public utility corporations and other predatory financial interests, constituting the money power which fattens on special privilege, and by their hosts of mercenaries including professional office-holders, lobbyists and shrewd, unprincipled lawyers.

Willing legislators, kept in power by the money of these interests, enact baffling elec- citizens into voting for a traction grab ordinance. They have, within the last few months, done all in their power to embarrass the Heney investigation and exposure of the beef trust. They are now doing everything in their power to discredit government ownership of railroads, telegraph and telephone lines. They have given labor the worst of it in every strike of importance.

It is fitting, therefore, that in Chicago the toilers should have their own newspaper, upon which they can rely for the truth about things of interest to workers and in which they can find expression of their point of view—a voice for the new majority composed of the hand and brain workers who heretofore have been diffused into various groups where they have been minorities, but who now are becoming conscious of their power of numbers and who are instinctively withdrawing from their respective political groups and are banding together here as in other countries to seize the reins of political power.

The New Majority and the Labor Party come together, hand in hand. Neither is complete alone. The Republican and Democratic parties have betrayed the people. The Labor Party comes to smite them. The newspapers have been the mouthpieces of the two old parties and their bosses, the money kings. The New Majority arises to defeat them by providing the workers with a mouthpiece and a forum for free discussion.

COOKS AND WAITERS VOTE BIG STRIKE

Men Authorize Leaders to Call Walk-out Wherever Necessary to Win

Cooks and waiters are engaged in a sink or swim struggle with the La Salle hotel that threatened, as this paper went to press, to tie up every hotel and restaurant in Chicago.

COUNTY LABOR PARTY IS NOW A REALITY

Convention Organizes With Enthusiasm and Adopts Constitution and City Platform

The nominating convention to name candidates for mayor, city clerk and city treasurer will meet at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon, January 12. The hall was not yet selected when this paper went to press, but will be announced in the next issue.

Like a well made machine, the Labor Party of Cook county made its start at the first delegate convention on Sunday afternoon at Musicians' hall.

The democracy of the Chicago Federation of Labor and affiliated unions had produced the parts and when the assemblers began work they found all the parts there and they fitted together perfectly.

There was life and promise manifested and old-timers in the labor movement and in its struggles to use political government for the benefit of the majority declared they had never seen a situation and organization that revealed such power for the common good.

Officers of the Party

Officers of the party were elected as follows:

Chairman, Charles Dold.

C. A. Sample, Secretary International Iron Molders Conference Board.

Wm. R. Boyer, International Broom and Whisk Makers Union.

W. A. Neer, President International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council.

C. M. Madsen, Secretary Painters and Decorators Union No. 194.

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Willing legislators, kept in power by the money of these interests, enact baffling election laws that make political success at the polls the prize of skillful manipulation. The clever propagandists of the interests keep the workers—the great majority—divided, so that they will be minorities in several hostile groups instead of a majority with a group of their own, able to grasp political power, unseat the money kings and govern themselves.

Foremost of the propagandists in the interest of special privilege are the newspapers—subsidized by millions of dollars worth of advertising given them by food trusts, State street stores, telephone, gas and electric companies and other profiteering and franchise-seeking corporations.

In return for the tribute they levy, the newspapers color and distort the news of the day, dispense editorials devised in the interest of the powers that rob the workers and otherwise seek to keep the public in ignorance and in such confusion as will prevent an uprising at the ballot box to capture the power of government for the great majority.

The special business of The New Majority will be to combat this big business propaganda of the newspapers.

Chicago has been particularly unfortunate in its betrayal by the newspapers that should have insured honest reporting of news and enlightened discussion of current events. Recently they have been seen to try to mislead or interest to workers and in which they can find expression of their point of view—a voice for the new majority composed of the hand and brain workers who heretofore have been diffused into various groups where they have been minorities, but who now are becoming conscious of their power of numbers and who are instinctively withdrawing from their respective political groups and are banding together here as in other countries to seize the reins of political power.

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Last Monday the rank and file of the union voted by referendum overwhelmingly in favor of a general walkout, authorizing the executive committee of the union to use its judgment and call strikes wherever necessary until the Hotel Keepers' Association exerts pressure on the La Salle hotel to play fair with its employes.

The strike came as a result of a fight for an eight hour day, one day off in seven, higher wages and other decent conditions. The cooks and waiters employed in several hotels and restaurants got their case before the National War Labor Board, but that board indefinitely postponed the case, practically refusing to act.

Thereupon the La Salle hotel management discharged all of its employes who were to appear as complainants before the board. The union men remaining at work called Business Agent Frederick E. Peabody to the hotel to talk to the chef in their behalf. The chef told Peabody he would have to see E. J. Stevens, manager of the hotel. Peabody said he could not do so without his committee, whereupon he was slugged.

The men walked out and as they were leaving the hotel several of them were assaulted.

The Sherman and Grand Pacific hotels were shortly afterward tied up with strikes and the question was discussed of calling a strike on all places members of the Hotel Keepers' Association on New Year's eve, the annual restaurant keeper's harvest night.

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I. Glassman, Garment Workers Union No. 21.

Margaret Haley, Women Trade Union League.

Hugh Crambert, Franklin Pressmens' Union No. 4.

John DeYoung, Secretary Calumet Joint Council.

Agnes Nestor, Glove Operators Union.

Albert Peterson, Secretary International Steam and Operators Engineers Local Joint Executive Board.

John Riley, Negro Organizer American Federation of Labor.

John Fitzpatrick, President Chicago Federation of Labor.

E. N. Nockels, Secretary Chicago Federation of Labor.

(The executive secretary will be appointed by the committee.)

Credentials of delegates from 165 unions were read by E. N. Nockels, secretary of the Federation of Labor. President Fitzpatrick presided as temporary chairman. The hall was filled and many had to stand or were unable to get into the hall. Throughout the deliberations of the convention every person present gave the closest attention.

Constitution and Platform Adopted

The constitution of the new party had been drafted and printed. It was adopted without change by unanimous vote.

The platform was next considered and was also adopted unanimously after a short discussion on a few technical points. Both the con-

LABOR TAKES STAND ON BIG CITY ISSUES

Municipal Ownership, Democracy in Schools Fair Police and Better Public Health Are Demanded

The Labor Party adopted a thoroly up-to-date municipal platform at last Sunday's convention, on which its candidates will seek support in the coming city elections. The following is the full text of the platform:

The Labor Party has been organized to break the power of rapacious public utility corporations, greedy big business interests and reactionary newspapers which now dominate our civic life. It has been organized to establish genuine democracy in all public affairs and to give expression to the ideals and aspirations of the vast army of men and women whose useful labor with hand and brain constitutes the true basis of all progress and prosperity.

The corporations are drunk with power. The gas company sends out extortionate bills without even taking the trouble to read the meters. If you object to their robbery they shut off the gas. Elevated railway companies, bound by the terms of their franchises not to charge more than five cents, raise fares to six cents. The surface street car lines, bound likewise to five cent fare are seeking permission from the State Utilities Commission to charge seven cents. All this is done to pay dividends on stock, millions of dollars of which is water representing no real investment whatever.

Although the Republican and Democratic parties are in complete control of the city and state governments and although they waste thousands of dollars on investigations and lawsuits, they give the consumers no real protection against these greedy corporations. The reason is not hard to find. Behind the scenes there is an invisible government—big business—which finances and controls both of the old political parties.

Big Business Rules

Big business rules Chicago.

It rules through the city council which passes vicious ordinances for the gas company and the street railway companies; conditions that are kept from public view. But first of all we must clean up our city government. We must win the fight for democracy right here at home.

With this end in view the Labor Party calls upon all forward-looking citizens to support its program and candidates in the coming election. United action will surely win the victory and hasten the day when Chicago will be a free city—a City for the People.

All candidates of the Labor Party are pledged to vote and work for the following program:

1. **Municipal Ownership and Operation.**

Regulation of public utility corporations has been a failure. The Labor Party is opposed to granting any new privileges or franchises to public utility corporations. It will exert all its power to secure municipal ownership and operation of all public utilities, including street railways, gas and electric light systems at an early date. It will agree to pay only for the actual physical value of these properties. No allowance whatever should be made for franchise rights and other so-called intangible values.

The Labor Party is absolutely opposed to any increase in surface or elevated car fares above five cents.

2. **Democracy in the Schools.**

For years a bitter controversy has raged over the control of our public schools. At bottom this controversy has been about one all-important question; namely, shall our schools be administered as factories to turn out cheap, docile workers for big business, or shall they be administered as educational institutions to develop free, independent American citizens?

The Labor Party stands for the best possible education for the children of Chicago—an education that will develop every child physically, mentally and morally. It stands for an educational system that will develop the spirit of self-reliance and fit every child for effective citizenship in a democracy. It stands for an educational system that will equip every child for some useful vocation, without neglecting the cultural studies that are essential for the understanding and enjoyment of life.

If elected to office, the candidates of the Labor Party will place a Board of Education in charge of the schools who are in sympathy with these ideals and who will

partment its standing army. It should be nobody's army. Policemen should protect the lives and property of citizens from violence in times of strike and lockout as well as at all other times, but strikers are citizens and their lives and property also should be protected from the blackjacks and revolvers of the hired thugs and professional strikebreakers imported by labor-hating bosses to create disorder and fasten the blame on labor.

4. **Protection of Health.**

For every citizen health is of first importance—especially for the working man. His health is his wealth. Therefore the Labor Party will insist that adequate power and sufficient funds be given the health department to assure all the people the benefits of modern medical and sanitary science. Special emphasis should be placed upon measures for the maintenance of a high degree of vigor among the people and on the prevention of disease. It is much better and cheaper to prevent accidents and sickness than to cure the victims of unsafe and insanitary conditions. The Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium with its dispensaries cost over $3,000,000 and the annual expense of maintaining this institution is over $600,000, yet it can not begin to care for all the applicants for admission. To combat tuberculosis and other diseases the Labor Party demands aggressive action along the following lines:

a. Provide sanitary and comfortable housing for every family in Chicago. Sunless and airless shacks and tenements should be destroyed. Attractive homes should be built by the city to be leased or sold on terms that would just cover the cost.

b. Wage relentless war against all poorly ventilated and insanitary kitchens, bakeries, workshops and factories.

c. Electrify the steam railways and clean the streets, thus eliminating smoke and dust.

d. Develop the system of parks, playgrounds, forest preserves and gymnasiums and provide better car service to get the people to the lake front during the summer months.

e. Establish public comfort stations at suitable locations throughout the city.

f. Provide frequent and regular service for the collection of garbage.

gas. Elevated railway companies, bound by the terms of their franchises not to charge more than five cents, raise fares to six cents. The surface street car lines, bound likewise to five cent fare are seeking permission from the State Utilities Commission to charge seven cents. All this is done to pay dividends on stock, millions of dollars of which is water representing no real investment whatever.

Although the Republican and Democratic parties are in complete control of the city and state governments and although they waste thousands of dollars on investigations and lawsuits, they give the consumers no real protection against these greedy corporations. The reason is not hard to find. Behind the scenes there is an invisible government—big business—which finances and controls both of the old political parties.

Big Business Rules

Big business rules Chicago.

It rules through the city council which passes vicious ordinances for the gas company and the street railway companies.

It rules through the State Public Utility Commission which invariably decides in favor of the corporations.

It rules through Jake Loeb, who presides over the Board of Education and is trying to destroy such measure of democracy as has been permitted to grow in our public schools.

It rules through high police officials who unjustly use their power to intimidate strikers and union pickets and even order the arrest of organizers who pass out cards inviting workers to attend union meetings.

It rules through Boards of Assessors and Boards of Review that reduce the taxes of rich bankers, corporations and department stores while they pile increased burdens on the backs of small home owners.

It rules through the big daily newspapers which protect special privilege by suppressing and distorting the truth.

Big business is king today and nothing short of a gigantic political and industrial upheaval will break its power. The empty promises of old party politicians can no longer deceive any intelligent voter. These professional office holders are simply agents of the invisible government. They have demonstrated by years of corrupt and inefficient government that they can not be trusted. They have betrayed us to the corporations. They have plunged the city into bankruptcy while garbage and ashes accumulate in our alleys.

Time to Clean up Chicago

It is time indeed to clean up our streets and alleys which, after all, only typify the rotten

For years a bitter controversy has raged over the control of our public schools. At bottom this controversy has been about one all-important question; namely, shall our schools be administered as factories to turn out cheap, docile workers for big business, or shall they be administered as educational institutions to develop free, independent American citizens?

The Labor Party stands for the best possible education for the children of Chicago—an education that will develop every child physically, mentally and morally. It stands for an educational system that will develop the spirit of self-reliance and fit every child for effective citizenship in a democracy. It stands for an educational system that will equip every child for some useful vocation, without neglecting the cultural studies that are essential for the understanding and enjoyment of life.

If elected to office, the candidates of the Labor Party will place a Board of Education in charge of the schools who are in sympathy with these ideals and who will really represent the people whose children attend the public schools. This board will entrust the work of education to well qualified educators who will be well paid for their services. All persons connected with the school system will be guaranteed the rights of free speech, freedom of association and secure tenure of office as long as they perform their duties faithfully.

3. Better Labor Conditions.

The Labor Party stands for the full recognition of Union Labor in all departments of the City Government, for the eight hour day and forty-four hour week, except where shorter hours already prevail, and for increases in pay sufficient to meet all increases in the cost of living.

It stands for the strict enforcement of Civil Service laws and secure tenure of office for all employes who perform their work satisfactorily.

It stands for the abolition of the contract system in all public work such as the paving of streets, laying of sewers and sidewalks. Such work can be done better and more economically by direct employment of the workers by the city with an eight hour day and union wages.

The Labor Party will insist that the police remain neutral in all industrial disputes; that there be no police interference with the work of union organizers and that the rights of union workingmen receive the same protection as the rights of employers. Big business makes the police department. To combat tuberculosis and other diseases the Labor Party demands aggressive action along the following lines:

a. Provide sanitary and comfortable housing for every family in Chicago. Sunless and airless shacks and tenements should be destroyed. Attractive homes should be built by the city to be leased or sold on terms that would just cover the cost.

b. Wage relentless war against all poorly ventilated and insanitary kitchens, bakeries, workshops and factories.

c. Electrify the steam railways and clean the streets, thus eliminating smoke and dust.

d. Develop the system of parks, playgrounds, forest preserves and gymnasiums and provide better car service to get the people to the lake front during the summer months.

e. Establish public comfort stations at suitable locations throughout the city.

f. Provide frequent and regular service for the collection of garbage.

5. Reduce the Cost of Living.

As a means of relieving the distress caused by the general and continuous increase in the cost of food we propose the establishment of wholesale and retail municipal markets and cold storage warehouses. These markets should be so located as to do away with needless trucking and to bring the people into direct touch with farmers and other food producers.

6. Just Taxation and Sound Finance.

Six years ago Chicago had a surplus of $3,000,000 in the treasury. Today the city is bankrupt and must borrow to meet its current expenses. The waste of city funds on useless office-holders and so-called experts must be stopped and the wealthy tax-dodgers must be required to pay their just share of the taxes.

If given the power the Labor Party will compel the corporations and big business interests to pay their taxes in full. Moreover the Labor Party proposes to secure for the community by taxation the wealth which the community creates through the increase in land values.

7. Home Rule and Unification.

The Labor Party stands for the fullest measure of home rule for Chicago so that the people of this city may settle their local problems and manage their local government without outside interference.

(Continued on page 10)

US Labor and Political Action, 1918–24

A Comparison of Independent Political Action in New York, Chicago and Seattle

Andrew Strouthous
Associate Lecturer in American History and Politics
Colchester Institute
Anglia Polytechnic University
and
Associate Lecturer
Open University

2000
NY, NY

3 One Step Forward: the Birth of the Labor Party, Chicago 1919–20

Chicago labour was the first of the three movements to form a labour party and take part in a major election. Although the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) had a long tradition of progressive activity and strong trade union support, the party did not fare as well as its Seattle counterpart. In the 1920 general election the new party performed badly at the polls, a blow from which it never recovered.

Considering that the CFL leadership had a far stronger base for its initiative than labour in the other two cities, why did it not achieve more? This chapter investigates why the CFL leadership was unable to turn union support for the labour party into electoral support from Chicago workers. Of course, the failure of the CFL's initiative was not just a matter of a lack of will. When it launched the party in 1919 the unions were growing. By the time of the 1920 election the union movement was in decline. Chicago politics were tougher than the Seattle variety, and city bosses did not shrink from exploiting ethnic and 'racial' divisions to block their rivals. Nonetheless in 1919 the new party's mayoralty campaign was the most successful ever in Chicago for independent working-class politics.

In assessing the strength of the new party it should be kept in mind that electoral results are not the only indicator of a party's influence. Large numbers of workers, immigrants and women did not vote in Chicago elections. However, the fact that electoral success was not immediate may have disillusioned many of the party's most optimistic supporters. Moreover it is not realistic to judge a party only three months old purely by the number of votes obtained. Nonetheless the question why did union membership outnumber the votes cast for the labour party is relevant. Also why did the largest working-class vote for Mayor not prove to be the beginning of greater things? To answer these questions it will be necessary to assess the strength of union support for the Cook County Labor Party (CCLP) and the key features in its development.[1]

UNION STRENGTH

Formally the majority of Chicago locals supported the new party. Though the CFL claimed to represent over 300 000 workers it could not communicate with them all. The main link was between local officials and delegates to the central labour body. Edward Nockels admitted that the Federation had never reached more than 5000 union members on any proposition because it did not have the machinery. He wanted the *New Majority* (*Majority*) to become that machinery. Unfortunately the *Majority* never achieved a consistent mass circulation. Thus, for the most part, the message never extended beyond the 5000 activists. The *Majority* lacked the tradition and roots of New York and Seattle's Socialist and progressive newspapers. It was the result of transforming the CFL's news-sheet into a newspaper at the launching of the CCLP. Without a broader political tradition to build on its distribution depended mainly on union branches; this proved to be a fundamental weakness.[2]

The radicalization of the period spurred unions into supporting the CFL's political initiatives; however, it was a matter of block affiliation, not of converting individuals. Those wishing to oppose the new party may not have blocked it at CFL meetings, but there were other means of obstruction. The party's newspaper depended on local union branches for distribution and some did their best to promote it, but others did their best to block it. In this they were aided by the AFL constitution, which prohibited payments to outside or political organizations. Opponents used delaying tactics, such as the holding of referendums or raising the problems of cost.

The CFL encouraged individual subscriptions but overall the circulation was never substantial. In an attempt to increase circulation, and to overcome the reticence of some union locals, Robert Buck replaced W. Z. Foster as business manager. However, the organizational change made little difference and circulation failed to increase. The *Majority*'s circulation did rise at times of major strikes, such as those in the stockyards, steel and rail. Circulation rose and fell with union activity; however, such spontaneous expansion did not provide a wider base of committed political support. Unfortunately strikes did not always occur at the same time as elections. As the party's strategy depended on winning elections, this was a serious handicap.[3]

The *Majority* gave extensive coverage to strikes, raising money for strikes and trade-union news. It emphasized that only in its pages could readers find the 'truth' about strikes, corruption, Russia and

the two parties. Yet the CFL and CCLP failed to overcome the divide that existed between workers' union activities and their political loyalties. Workplace allegiances to the CFL were not transformed into political ones in the community. Conversely issues concerning production were raised only in a general sense in party policy. The party did not raise the issue of workers' control. It was a reformist party; however, to assert that the party was reformist does not, on its own, explain the cause of failure.[4]

The Labor Party in Seattle had far more electoral success, but related even less to workers' economic struggle, and was also a reformist party. Secondly, labour parties by definition are 'reformist' – that is they operate inside the parameters set by existing political institutions. They also operate within the geographical constraints of electoral democracy. The contradiction posed by the separation of the workplace and the electoral arena is a problem that all labour parties confront. In spite of this divide many have succeeded, and it is not necessary to look outside the USA to find examples of such success. The successes of the Minnesota Farmer Labor Party, and to a lesser extent those of the Washington FLP, prove the case. None of these examples succeeded by forsaking reformist politics.[5]

This has a direct bearing on understanding the Chicago situation for even though the CCLP often rejected the language of class it remained a working-class party. The actual politics of the party did not rest on a revolutionary understanding of class, or directly on struggle. However, it is not the case that the Party did not relate to class or workers' struggles; rather, the Party mirrored the division between politics and the workplace. At election time it raised municipal issues at workers' meetings and stood candidates linked to the unions. Thus meetings took place to raise support for striking rail workers and the *Majority* gave the steel strike massive coverage. However, the *Majority* did not always make it clear if it was the voice of the Party or the CFL. Nonetheless, it was clear that the *Majority* supported both. The newspaper's coverage inspired letters of gratitude from those involved in strikes.[6]

However, the firmest link between the new party and workers was the fact that most of its leading activists were also local union officials. As in New York, it was, for the most part, a party of the lower layer of trade-union officials. The new party also had the added strength that the Illinois State Federation and the majority of Illinois United Mine Workers (UMW) locals endorsed it. Thus it had an organic link to the locally organized working class. There is no doubt that the divide between workplace and community in Chicago was an important

factor. Nonetheless, Seattle, using an almost identical strategy, had a degree of electoral success, so why not Chicago? To answer that it is necessary to cover the same ground detailed earlier on New York. That is how the party operated, how it sought electoral support, the role of women and progressives, the effect of the main party machines and ethnic division. The attitudes and actions of the Socialists and the AFL are also detailed.

Chicago was no different to New York or Seattle when it came to women's and progressive support. The Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) supported the new party and used its monthly bulletin to advertise the activities of the Labor Party. Also its leading organizers played a prominent role in helping the party. However, the CCLP was not as dependent on the WTUL as was the case for the New York's ALP. The personal interest of Nockels and Fitzpatrick ensured that CFL activists were central to party administration. Additionally the CFL had a far better relationship with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACW) than their New York counterparts: Hillman spoke on CCLP platforms and donated money to the party's funds.[7]

PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL SUPPORT

There was a mixed response from Chicago's liberals and progressives. Some prominent individuals did support the new party and were active in supporting the mayoralty campaign, though neither the CFL nor the Labor Party nationally ever managed to get the majority of organized progressive support. The CFL did not play the leading role in progressive political activity that the Seattle Central Labor Council (SCLC) did. At times it received limited support from some of the progressive magazines and Frank Walsh gave financial support, but he never joined the party. A number of minor progressive figures and organizations supported the CCLP. The University of Chicago's Political Science department supported Fitzpatrick's mayoral campaign, as did Margaret Dreier Robins, leader of the WTUL, and Mary McDowell, the Director of the University of Chicago Settlement House. The Municipal Voters League endorsed six labour candidates and the *Daily News* endorsed three, but this was not as extensive as the wholesale progressive support given to the Seattle movement in this period.[8]

Though some in the Chicago Socialist Party wanted a good relationship with the new party, on the whole relations between the two parties remained bitter and hostile. Socialists often made attacks on the new

party, and Fitzpatrick replied with equal vehemence. Some local Socialists had already left for the Labor Party; others split to the left joining the new communist organizations. The remaining rump could not afford to drop their electoral intervention for fear of criticism from the left. During this period splits and state repression bedevilled the Socialist Party. With many of its members either in prison or facing trial for anti-war activity, there is little evidence of coherent thought given to responding to the new labour parties.

The Socialist Party in Chicago was far weaker than the party in New York, but far stronger than the Seattle party. Those that remained loyal to the Socialist Party continued with their electoral activity, and relations between them and the CFL became increasingly acrimonious. The CCLP was only months old when the CFL leadership felt the need to pour scorn on the Socialists. James Duncan of Seattle, addressing the CFL, 'suggested that the Socialist Party swallow its pride and go along with the Labor Party'. A delegate from the Machinists Union Local 478 replied that he had associated with the Socialist Party for 25 years. It had made some mistakes but it would continue its work and would not step aside for anyone else. Fitzpatrick replied that he had offered to speak on Socialist Party platforms in the past but was prohibited 'from speaking for their candidates'. Nockels took a further swipe, stating the Labor Party had difficulty getting on ballot papers, but it would succeed in spite of the fact:

> That for one time at least the Socialists, Samuel Gompers and the Executive Council of the AFL were in agreement in opposition to organized labor entering the political arena to speak for labor.[9]

The acrimony did not diminish and by mid-1921 relations were so bad that Robert Buck claimed he had found Socialists trying to wreck his efforts from within.[10] Electorally in the first year the Socialists trailed behind the CCLP in Chicago; later in 1920 they improved their position, but at this stage the Socialists were not a barrier to the Labor Party. Nor was there a block of Socialist unions that could or wanted to deprive the CFL of money and resources, but in the 1920 election campaign the Socialists displaced the CCLP as Chicago's leading worker's party.

ORGANIZING THE PARTY

The organizers of the new party declared that 'The Labor Party is a young giant, or it is nothing.' The men who had won the war could win

the city with a party barely two months old. This raising of the stakes did nothing to prepare supporters for defeat. Although some did argue the need for a long-term approach, it was the more upbeat declarations that dominated the *Majority*. Perhaps carried away by the heady atmosphere of early 1919, supporters believed that a party that had existed for only a few months could win Chicago at its first attempt. Yet party leaders were well aware that there were 3000 voting precincts in the city, and that unlike the other parties they could not afford to pay poll watchers.[11]

However, CFL activists believed they could cover the precincts by organizing a 'political picket line' on the election day. The CFL called on all organized workers to take election day off to ensure the honest casting and counting of votes. Though the call was blazoned on the front page of the *Majority* no more than a minority of workers responded. The party, only months old, had not established itself sufficiently in time for the election. Indeed by 26 March 1919 the party had only received per capita payments for 59 482 members, not for the 300 000 claimed at its founding. As the per capita fee was a block payment by unions active membership was probably less than the smaller figure. Another indicator of involvement was the sales of the *Majority*. The Stockyards Labor Council (SLC) bought half of the first run, while the teachers purchased 5000 copies and milk-wagon drivers and truckers another 5000. Yet by 12 April 1919 the paper had only 4336 subscribers.[12]

However, not all plans were as wishful as the picket line of the ballot and, in spite of the heady rhetoric, the Party did methodically build ward organizations, establishing 27 ward branches by 22 February. At the election the Party was able to stand candidates in all but two of Chicago's 35 wards. However, when the municipal election took place many of the wards were only weeks old. This rapid growth raises the question as to how it was possible for such an infant, and untried, party to do as well as it did. Describing the CCLP's mayoral election campaign and an analysis of the election results will answer this question.[13]

THE CAMPAIGN

The Cook County Labor Party did not enter the primary elections; instead it entered directly the city election of 1 April 1919. It is likely that the abstention of the CCLP from the primaries was a disadvantage, but it was a decision born of necessity as the party had not

completed building its ward organization.[14] By late February the *Majority*'s campaign was in full flow for the April election. Although the CCLP's programme was a narrow one based on progressive municipal reforms, the actual campaign was broader. Chicago labour leaders, and their supporters, used class terms at many of the big campaign rallies held in Chicago. There was a massive gap between the militant rhetoric offered by the campaigners and the solutions actually proposed. However, as we shall see below, it was not irrelevant to the experience of Chicago workers. It was also a rhetoric far to the left of that used in the 1920 James Duncan mayoralty campaign in Seattle.[15]

Fitzpatrick used his platform to highlight the poverty of workers and the brutality of the police against strikers. During 1917–19 the CFL organized mass recruiting drives in meatpacking and steel, and Fitzpatrick did not fail to draw the links between the political and industrial. He attacked the excessive profits of the 'Meat Kings' made at the expense of packinghouse workers. This was a prelude to the intensification of recruiting drives in the stockyards in June 1919. He also attacked the anti-labour record of his opponents. If the Labor Party obtained power, it had a programme that would rapidly relieve 'oppressed' workers. He singled out Thompson, the Republican incumbent, for bullying striking streetcar men into submission and especially for his use of the police against striking women garment workers. W. Z. Foster also played a prominent role in the campaign, and the *Majority* gave the campaign to organize steel extensive coverage.[16]

The *Majority* stressed that the election battle was between big business and labour: 'United Capital would meet United Labor' at the ballot box. Here was a rhetoric far more class-conscious than the progressive or 'Americanist' tones of the *Seattle Union Record*. Neither Lincoln nor Marx were invoked, and though the language was closer to Marx's than Lincoln's it would be the state legislature that would carry out immediate reforms, not a workers' revolution. Frank Walsh spoke on Fitzpatrick's behalf during the campaign calling for 'Hands Off Russia', an end to all kings and a free Ireland. He attacked high profits, low wages, poverty and inhumane conditions. The situation was resolvable only by workers' control and industrial democracy. Industrial democracy, for Walsh, meant cooperation between employer and employees. Workers would have a voice equal to the employers, not overall control. The *Majority* appealed, just before election day, for voters to help prevent revolution. This could only be done by allowing

labour to implement its constructive programme. Those who opposed the Labor Party were stoking the fires of revolution.[17]

NOT ALL ICE CREAM AND BARN DANCES: WOMEN AND THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign did not restrict itself to issues that concerned those involved in industrial conflict. It also specifically set out to win the support of women. The Fourteen Points of Labor adopted by the CFL demanded complete equality of men and women in government and industry. It called for the full enfranchisement of women (women already had the vote in Illinois by 1913). and equal pay for men and women doing similar work. An appeal was made to every trade-union woman, and to the wives, mothers and sisters of male trade unionists. They could help elect the ticket that would protect every home by ensuring fathers had a sufficient wage to make child and wife labour unnecessary. The party believed its municipal platform. with its demands for better street lighting, buildings, plumbing and recreation facilities, was a platform for women. Margaret Dreier Robins specifically endorsed Fitzpatrick for Mayor. Long before it had been the order of the day he had supported women's enfranchisement and had helped women to industrial, economic and political equality. He had organized the provision of food for 50 000 people during the 16-week-long garment workers strike. Women's trade unions, and additionally women's auxiliaries of unions, including those of the Milk Wagon Drivers', Post Office Clerks' and Switchmen's Unions, received the appeal.[18]

For the most part the *Majority* addressed women as mothers and as consumers who were sometimes workers. Women that ignored plain political argument could be cajoled into agreement by the 'hilarities' of barn dances and card parties. Clare Masilotti enticed support by giving away free ice cream in her store. However, it was not all ice creams and barn dances. The women's campaign committee raised a number of serious issues and did a substantial share of the canvassing. Agnes Nestor and Margaret Haley were among those on the executive committee. Elizabeth Maloney of Waitresses Union 484 was appointed Chairman (*sic*) of the Women's Campaign Committee. Ida Fursman was one of the most prominent aldermanic candidates of the whole campaign. In particular she raised the issue of wages for teachers; she believed that wages were so low that 'better women' could not be

induced to become teachers.[19] The two female candidates were very prominent, and a number of prominent women activists supported the Party. Women were responsible for collecting a third of signatures on candidates' petitions, and in the 26th ward distributed 20 000 election leaflets. However, it was far easier to get women activists involved in canvassing than it was to get working-class women to register for the vote.[20]

Unions are strongest where they can relate to workers in a collective situation, the workplace. In 1920 women were a smaller percentage of the workforce than they are today. Of the 1 231 468 persons gainfully employed in Chicago only 311 615 were women, that is 25 per cent of total workforce. Thus women were a minority of the workforce and unions; the link between women and the unions was weaker than was the case for men. This was not just a matter of labour's attitudes but of women's position in society overall. This explains why the approach to women voters was mainly a community-based one, and why the response of women was weaker in spite of some very good reasons as to why they should have supported the new party.[21]

UNIONS, WARDS AND VOTERS

The decision to stand for the city municipal elections on 1 April created a focus for building ward organization. For the city-wide contest the Party had chosen an ethnically balanced slate of Fitzpatrick for mayor (Irish), John Kikulski (Polish) for city clerk and Knute Torkelson (Swedish) for city treasurer. Kikulski was president of Local Union 546 of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, and a leading union organizer in the Union Stock Yards for the Stock Yards Labor Council (SLC). Torkelson was a member of the left-wing Carpenters and Joiners Local Union No. 181. However, the slate extended beyond union officials with Morris N. Friedland's nomination for municipal court judge. Friedland was an attorney in the City Hall Square, and though well known in legal circles, was not a union activist. William E. Rodriguez, an ex-Socialist Party member, stood for judge of the Superior Court. Well-known politically, he had served three years as alderman for the 15th ward and had a reputation of supporting labour.[22]

The majority of aldermanic candidates were prominent local union officials. The 26th ward chose as their aldermanic candidate T. F. Neary, a member of the Teamsters for 20 years. The 29th ward stood

Martin P. Murphy, President of the Stockyards Council, for alderman. Ida M. Fursman, President of the Chicago Teachers Federation, stood in the 27th Ward. Clare Masilotti was nominated for the 19th Ward; though the owner of a florist's shop, she had played a leading role in the 1910 garment workers' strike among male and female Italians. The ward had a substantial Italian population.

Nonetheless not all the candidates were trade union militants. In the 17th Ward Henry Anielewski, a Polish journalist and socialist, was the candidate. In the 11th ward, a carpet and rug contractor, who still considered himself a union man, was the candidate. However, the majority of candidates were trade-union activists and it is this direct link to organized workers that explains why the new party won a respectable vote on its first outing. In other words, where the unions provided a strong organic link between the Party and the local population it proved possible to win workers away from the old parties. This also proved to be a weakness, for it meant that those responsible for running union locals on a day-to-day basis had to wear two hats. At times when there was no union activity this was not a major problem, but during intense union activity it was not possible to wear both hats at once. Usually the political hat was discarded, but in the run-up to the election of April 1919 this was not the case. Up to 1 April 1919 ward organization was all important but the following campaign for the Constitutional Convention ('Con Con') required district organization. The party changed its organization accordingly, amalgamating wards into districts. This interruption of routine contributed to a weakening of ward organization by the time of the municipal elections of 1920. By 14 February 1920 the number of aldermanic candidates definitely standing was reduced to 16, and when a candidate died of pneumonia it fell to 15. The reduced number of candidates, and the inability to defend them against disqualification, is evidence that the wards were far weaker after a year of activity. What caused this decline in Party strength after its first year of activity? [23]

The answer, partly, lies in the activity that followed the mayoral election of 1919 when the CCLP shifted to campaigning for Con Con. The Party provided a special programme for a new state constitution. The measure most directed at workers was that of Democracy in Industry. This proposed the reorganization of mining, manufacturing and mercantile industries, putting such industries upon a cooperative basis, including the right of employees to elect representatives to boards of directors. The importance of Con Con was explained to workers, with a stress on the need to curb the power of big business

and the judiciary. Though the Constitutional Convention was the main campaign of the CCLP, the *Majority* did cover other issues, including the urging of open trade with Soviet Russia as a means of reducing unemployment. Also the national steel strike and the recruiting campaign in the stockyards made the front page.[24]

The campaign for Con Con failed, with no labour candidates elected. However, the defeat received scant analysis and attention and the *Majority* immediately switched its attention to the founding of the National Labor Party. It argued that workers had suffered at the hands of a Democratic administration; little better could be expected from the Republicans. Thus it was imperative that workers now had their own national party. The rhetoric now moved to the left as it declared labour was starting an 'Open Drive On Plutes'. Workers were preparing to take over the industries of the nation peacefully and run them in the interest of those who produce its wealth. Rather disingenuously, the *Majority* attempted to boost the campaign by claiming that Samuel Gompers supported the Labor Party. This claim resulted from a loose interpretation of Gompers' speech outlining the AFL's non-partisan policy. Two weeks later it admitted that although the logic of Gompers' doctrine led to advocating a labour party, in fact he was against it. The ensuing row between Gompers and the CFL became the main concern of the *Majority* for the whole of March. It completely eclipsed the campaign of the two labour candidates standing for alderman. Apart from reproducing the municipal platform with added emphasis on public ownership of all utilities, propaganda for the party became almost non-existent.[25]

The pending Fall elections, which included congressional and local county positions, saw the *Majority* return to more outward-going matters. Candidates campaigned not just on the municipal platform, but on National and State Labor Party programmes. Once again Frank Walsh gave his services, stating that he believed the Labor Party could win. The old parties were hopeless and a party of the workers was inevitable. The *Majority* launched its campaign with the slogan 'All Power to the People'. It emphasized that the Party was the workers' own party, financed by workers, and in the interest of 'workers of factory, farm and office'. [26]

At its national convention the Labor Party became the Farmer Labor Party (FLP) and nominated Parley P. Christensen for President, with Max Hayes as his running mate. The *Majority* became the organ of the national party. With the General Election approaching it concentrated on national issues at the expense of local ones. It reproduced

the platform of the FLP, combining an emphasis on 'Americanism' with a call for an end to Imperialism at home and abroad. It also advocated the democratic control of industry and a bill of rights for labour. For the rest of the campaign the *Majority* carried reports on the progress of Christensen but few arguments as to why workers should vote FLP. Indeed the paper seemed to find the most persuasive arguments for voting labour in the pages of the *Nation*. It reproduced an article that half-heartedly recommended a vote for Christensen or even Debs, not because either could win, but because it might create a political realignment in the future. In the final days before the election the *Majority* concentrated on Parley P. Christensen's campaign; meanwhile the campaign for Cook County posts received scant attention.[29] In the transition from being the newspaper of the CFL and the CCLP to the national organ of the FLP, the *Majority* had lost its way. Local issues were hardly visible among the national news. Lacking any consistent ideology, the *Majority*'s content veered from class rhetoric to municipal reform and, at times, it declared it was not a party based on any one class. The paper had lost its 'local feel' and relevance.

GAUGING PARTY SUPPORT

The three major election campaigns, the founding of the FLP, and the actions of the CFL, party activists and the *Majority* are detailed above. The question is now raised: to what extent did this activity influence the rank-and-file members of the union and beyond?

The CCLP was capable of holding large meetings, rallies and picnics. Six thousand attended a ratification meeting for Fitzpatrick, addressed by Governor Lyn Frazier of North Dakota and the Non-Partisan League, raising $3600. A few weeks later 8000 heard Walsh speak at a Labor Party meeting, with $4800 raised. Moreover, not only the big-name speakers addressed large meetings. John Kikulski spoke to large numbers in English and Polish, especially in the areas adjacent to the stockyards and in the Polish Northside. In the 29th ward Martin P. Murphy, President of the SLC and candidate for alderman, spoke to a Labor Party meeting of 250. Stanley Borzinski, of Local 658 of the Butcher Workmen, addressed the meeting in Polish. Even though the Party was weaker after the spring 1919 defeat, it was still capable of holding large meetings. Thus in the September thousands attended a Labor Party picnic to hear Glen Plumb outline his plans for the railways. In District Four, a district that contained 50 000 workers, 2000

attended a Labor Party meeting. Although Christensen won few Chicago votes in the 1920 presidential election he did attract large crowds. Thousands, including women and children, attended the 'monster picnic' that opened the FLP general election campaign.[28]

ACTIVE UNION SUPPORT

Neither the large meetings addressed by the big names nor the support of prominent local progressives can explain the depth of support that the Party gained. The key to that support was the trade-union movement of Chicago and beyond. It is clear, as detailed above, that there was a discrepancy between the support offered by the local unions and actual delivery. There was some opposition: some local officials supported the Socialists, some the Democrats; and one publication, the *Unionist*, attacked the CCLP and supported Gompers' non-partisan policy. However, the opposition was not substantial enough to block the CFL's determination to build a party. The supporters of the *Unionist* produced 400 000 copies of their newspaper for the election. It meant the CFL had to spend time and energy refuting the paper and trying to stop its production. The CFL withdrew union status from the *Unionist*; however, its pro-Gompers propaganda probably boosted those trade unionists who supported the official AFL position.[29]

The *Unionist* could not block Fitzpatrick or the CCLP, for both had Illinois miners' endorsement. Delegates representing 95 000 organized mine-workers voted to endorse the FLP. The miners debated as to whether dues should be compulsory or not, finally agreeing that they should be voluntary. The miners' decision demonstrated enthusiasm for the FLP, coupled with fear of upsetting the AFL establishment. Miners' locals provided much-needed electoral success. Though these electoral successes were outside of Chicago they encouraged the activists of the CCLP. At least they could point to FLP councils and mayors in these outer districts.[30]

Overall the level of official union support was more impressive than in New York and even Seattle. For Chicago could bring out the 'big guns' on its campaign platforms – Sidney Hillman, Duncan McDonald and John Walker all spoke on Fitzpatrick's behalf. Union support did not just remain on an official or formal level; many of those who officially endorsed the party gave practical help, while other trade unionists gave unofficial support. Thus the Carmen allowed the Party to use their labour temple. At a national level, an unofficial

gathering of rank-and-file railroad craft workers meeting in Chicago, representing 400 lodges and objecting to a wage settlement, also endorsed the party.[31]

The unions also provided the bulk of financial support, although it was never enough for the Party's needs. Only half of the money required for the 1919 Mayoral election was raised by 5 April 1919. At one CFL meeting $6951 was pledged for the mayoral campaign, including substantial donations from the Teamsters Joint Council, the Brick and Clay Workers Council and Stockyards locals. The fact that the Teamsters alone had given $3000 speaks volumes about the depth of union support: in New York the Teamsters had led the assault against the Labor Party. Nor was it just during election campaigns that donations were received. The ACW donated $3000 to fund the *Majority* outside of any electoral activity. However, while the solid trade-union base of the CCLP could not guarantee success at the polls or provide unlimited funds, it did provide the Party with a stability and longevity that its comrades in New York could not achieve.[32]

THE PARTY AND BLACK CHICAGO

Though the party had the black AFL organizer John Riley on its executive and stood a black candidate, propaganda aimed at the sizeable black population of Chicago was, for the most part, conspicuous by its absence. William Robert Wilson ran in the mainly black second ward. Black butchers set up a Colored Club of the Cook County Labor Party in the spring of 1919. Fitzpatrick sat on the Negro Workers Advisory Board, and his supporters in the packinghouses successfully recruited many black workers. But the political work put into winning blacks to the Labor Party bore little comparison to the effort put into the trade unions generally. At election time, for example, the CFL systematically worked at winning trade-union support for its political ambitions. A resolution called on every delegate to get the 'Committee of 21' to visit their local to promote the *Majority*.[33]

In Chicago the majority of blacks had allied themselves to the Republican machine. However, this was not unconditional loyalty for in 1923 over half of the black vote deserted the Republican mayoral candidate. Black voting strength in the North had increased tremendously before the First World War. Although by 1920 blacks were only 4 per cent of Chicago's population their alliance with the Republican

Party in the 1920s did at times prove to be crucial, as was the case in the 1919 mayoral election.[34]

At a national level there was no substantial counter-argument by black organizations to the political position of Chicago's African-American community. In 1912 W. E. B. Du Bois had at first supported Theodore Roosevelt's third-party movement, but Roosevelt defeated a resolution demanding equal rights for Negroes. This had disaffected many blacks from third-party politics. It was not until the La Follette campaign of 1924 that Du Bois and his circle supported a third-party campaign. However, the majority of blacks in Chicago remained allied to the Republican machine. It was not easy to break this voting tradition in the Chicago of 1919–20, and the Cook County Labor Party was ill-equipped to do so.[35]

The problem was not that the CFL and the *Majority* opposed unity with blacks, but a failure to understand how to relate to Chicago's black working class. The belief that there was 'no Negro problem' was held for the best of motives. United union action could solve all problems, but not all African-Americans accepted the invitation to join. A large proportion of Northern-born blacks did join the union, but thousands of Southern migrants working in the stockyards were less receptive. Who was to blame for this recruiting difficulty? At best the CFL believed it was due to the naivety of blacks misled by employers and their own community 'misleaders'. The CFL did not consider the problems of discrimination that blacks faced on a daily basis from employers, landlords and some sections of the AFL. For the most part there was no consistent propaganda on the issue; except during the July race riot and the packinghouse crisis, articles directed at the black community were rare in the *Majority*.[36]

The black community had its own press, although only two of these newspapers were consistently anti-union. One of these was the *Negro Advocate*, whose virulent denunciations of the stockyard unions attracted little black interest. A more significant newspaper the *Broad Ax*, also ignored labour activity. The less influential *Chicago Whip* took an interest in CFL activity and carried a regular column by black AFL organizer John Riley. However, by the 1921–22 packinghouse strike it began ignoring union campaigns, even by black organizers. The most influential newspaper in black Chicago was the *Defender*. It had far more influence in the black community than the *Majority* or any rival black newspaper. During Fitzpatrick's election campaign the *Defender* supported Bill Thompson, and a majority of blacks voted for him. At Thompson's re-election the *Defender* trumpeted that they were the only major newspaper to support him. It reproduced the *Chicago Daily Journal* headline 'NEGROES ELECT BIG BILL'. Thompson thanked the *Defender* for its support, but denied that he had 'given undue recognition to the Colored people'. Although a majority of blacks voted Republican in the 1919 Mayoral election, 40 per cent voted for other parties: of these 24 per cent voted official Democrat.[37]

By the general election of 1920 the *Defender* had not lost any of its loyalty to the Republicans. There was much jubilation over Harding's victory and no mention of the FLP in its election analysis. However, it would be wrong to assume that the *Defender* was anti-labour. Though it often criticized organized labour it occasionally reported labour's activities with much enthusiasm. In 1918 it proclaimed 'LABOR DAY PARADE LARGEST IN HISTORY', claiming that 'Members of the Race were represented in many of the unions'.[38] The *Defender*'s opinion changed after the hot summer of 1919 exploded with race riots and steel and stockyard strikes, and it became more cautious and circumspect in its attitude to labour and class.[39]

In June 1919 the Stockyards Labor Council (SLC) intensified its recruiting campaign. On Sunday, 6 July thousands of black and white workers attended an outdoor rally. The *Majority* proclaimed: 'If the colored packinghouse worker doesn't come into the union, it isn't the fault of the Stock-Yard Labor Council.' J. W. Johnstone, Secretary of the SLC, welcomed the 'checkerboard' crowd. Kikulski also addressed the meeting, in Polish, emphasizing the need for cooperation between blacks and whites if the union was to achieve 100 per cent membership. After a speaker from the Urban League several black trade-union speakers outlined the benefits of trade unionism to the crowd. C. Ford, a black organizer for meat cutters in St Louis, claimed that there was no special colour problem, it was no different to the Irish or Russian problem. The SLC had opened the door of union membership to black workers, but if they 'didn't stampede through it then they only had themselves to blame'. The problem that some of the AFL unions practised exclusion in the stockyards did not merit a mention. The SLC made numerous attempts to recruit African-Americans, but most who enrolled in the unions were Northerners. The task proved harder than that envisaged by the *Majority*'s enthusiastic reporting.[40]

It was not until the race riot of late July that the issue of 'Race' made the front page of the *Majority*. It blamed the meatpackers (the employers) for the riots; they had discriminated against union men, sacked them and replaced them with non-union black workers. They had

subsidized black politicians and religious leaders to propagandize against the unions. Notwithstanding all this, it claimed that the unions had managed to recruit large numbers of black workers. The *Majority* complained of police interference in the SLC's attempt to organize a joint demonstration of black and white workers on 6 July. The *Majority* believed that the bosses had told the police that the blacks were armed and would attack the whites. The police forced the unions to form two separate demonstrations, one black, one white, though the final rally became integrated. The *Majority* argued that union leaders tried to prevent the race riot, claiming that 'neither black nor white union men participated in the rioting, despite the lying accounts published daily by the kept press'. Locals of several black unions passed resolutions calling for unity and an end to strife. The WTUL called on black workers to join the union and offered every possible assistance in their organization.[41]

As soon as the crisis passed so did the *Majority*'s coverage of the race issue. The crisis also explains why the *Defender* became more moderate. Only a few weeks previously it had suggested labour might rule; now it stated that capital had rights that labour must respect. Workers should seek improvement in a dignified and lawful manner. Though striking iron and steel workers were mostly lawful, their actions could encourage lawlessness. Blacks were not strike-breakers, but if the AFL did not recognize their increasing importance to the economy they could feel impelled to form their own separate unions. A week later the *Defender* became even more conservative urging union men, black and white, to remember they were employees not employers, to take orders not give them, and to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. For a brief while in 1919 the *Defender* moved ideologically closer to labour's progressives. Now it moved closer to labour's conservatives, its trajectory caused by objective conditions, the failure of the steel strike and the Chicago race riot. Whether the progressives could have halted the *Defender*'s shift to the right is a matter of conjecture. It is possible that a different approach to the 'colour problem', might have split some of the *Defender*'s readership away from its conservative leadership.[42]

This was not an impossible task, for several thousand black workers did join the unions and a small number the CCLP. The tragedy was that the CFL approached African-American workers on the supposition that 'there is no colour problem'. Though an economistic approach that stressed class interest was, to an extent, progress for trade unionists, the *Majority* was not just a trade-union newspaper, it

represented a political party. It was the political approach to black workers that was sadly lacking. Thus little effort went into breaking black Chicagoans from their commitment to the Republican Party.

LABOUR AT THE POLLS

The election of 1 April 1919 gave 55 990 votes to Fitzpatrick, or just over 8 per cent of the votes cast. Compared to the victors' vote of 37.6 per cent or the main Democrat vote of 34.5 per cent, it was not that impressive. However, Thompson's plurality was very small, a mere 21 622; he only won because the Democrats had split. Therefore the black vote was an important factor in Thompson's victory. If the CCLP had taken just 12 000 black votes then the Democrats would have won, and labour could have claimed to hold the balance of power.[43] However a more appropriate measure of labour's effectiveness is to compare the result with previous working-class party interventions in the mayoral election. In Chicago that meant the Socialist Party, whose highest vote ever had been 25 883 in 1911. In 1919 the Socialist vote remained static at 24 079. Thus the combined working-class vote in 1919 of 81 557 was the highest ever. *The intervention of the CCLP had increased the working-class vote by over three times.* Considering that the CCLP was only months old and had not taken part in the primaries, it was a creditable result.[44]

Analysis of the vote shows that the key to the vote was the working-class nature of the wards and their proximity to workplaces. Fitzpatrick's vote averaged 8 per cent, but it was higher in working-class wards. Thus he got 16 per cent in the 29th ward (adjacent to the stockyards), but only 2 per cent in the 2nd. In 16 out of 35 wards he received more than 8 per cent. These included the traditionally Democratic working-class 5th, 29th and 30th wards, all located in the areas of the stockyards where many new immigrants lived. As some workers in these wards did not have the franchise or register to vote, the result may have underestimated labour's support. The most successful aldermanic candidate was Ida Fursman, the only Labor Party woman to remain on the ballot, who polled 5212 votes, far more than any other CCLP aldermanic candidate. Only in ten wards did the party get less than 7 per cent; this occurred for the most part where there was no aldermanic candidate, or where ward organization was weak. The party did well in wards that were mainly working class, with substantial immigrant populations and Democrat majorities. These

were also areas where the party had held large rallies and effective campaigns.[45]

THE AFTERMATH

The mayoral election of 1919 proved to be the high point of labour party voting in Chicago. It was not just voting numbers that declined, so did union support and finance. With one or two exceptions the party's general trajectory was downwards. As outlined above, the Constitutional Convention campaign, which failed dismally, undermined ward organization. Fitzpatrick and Walsh had good reasons for emphasizing the importance of Con Con. They feared the introduction to Illinois of legislation similar to the Kansas Industrial Bill, which made striking to all intents and purposes illegal. The poor result probably reflected the fact that most of Chicago's workers did not take such a threat that seriously.[46]

The ability to stand in the yearly municipal elections declined, as did ward organization and union support. This was paralleled by serious defeats in the stockyards and steel. No doubt Gompers' stand against independent politics and his advocacy of a militant non-partisan campaign in early 1920 deterred many union activists from maintaining their commitment to the new party. It is also probable that the resources and exertion required for day-to-day trade-union survival reduced active support to passive loyalty. Many union constitutions forbade the use of funds for political purposes. This explains the difference in number between those who supported the Party officially and those who actually gave money: the former number was far larger. By the election of 1920, in spite of the launching of a national party, the Party had made little progress.

Parley P. Christensen, the FLP presidential candidate, was hardly known in Chicago. Eugene Debs, the Socialist Party candidate had a far wider reputation. This added up to humiliation at the polls, with only 4381 voting for the FLP presidential candidate. Only a year earlier the FLP had outstripped the Socialists at the polls in Chicago; now the tables had turned. However, there was little for the Socialists to celebrate either, for Debs had won 13.2 per cent of the vote in 1912. In the 1919 mayoral election the joint CCLP and Socialist vote had been 11.6 per cent: now it was only 6.6 per cent of the presidential vote. For the FLP the situation was worse, for its share was only 0.6 per cent of the vote.[47]

ETHNIC AND CATHOLIC VOTING

Some historians maintain that the Catholic Church has had a conservative influence on sections of the working class. In particular workers of Irish, Polish and Italian descent are cited as a barrier to independent political activity. In Chicago Americans of 'native origin' were in the minority, and the Catholic Church accounted for over half of regular churchgoers. The Irish also had substantial influence in the Democratic Party of Chicago, and to a lesser extent so did the Poles and Italians. However, it is not the case that between 1919 and 1920 these groups were straightforwardly pro-Democratic, anti-Republican and anti-FLP. Moreover, before 1919 it was even less the case and ethnic attitudes towards the main parties and the trade unions were not always that different from the rest of the population nationally.[48]

In national elections, ethnic voting patterns in Chicago did not differ from national trends to the same extent as they did in local elections. In other words, local party loyalties did not automatically transfer to national candidates. Although many Poles came from a peasant background and were unskilled, unions in the stockyards did recruit the newcomers. At times between 10 to 15 per cent of Chicago's Poles voted Socialist. Though the Socialist Party never built a mass base in 'Polonia' this was not particularly unique to Polish areas of Chicago.[49]

A substantial number of Poles consistently supported the Democrats. The Democrats' opposition to prohibition became interpreted as support for Catholicism. Church leaders also preferred the Democrats because of the growing anti-Catholicism of Republicans. However, the Poles, like most Americans, took more interest in national elections than local ones and, to a lesser extent, were affected by national trends at general elections. Thus many Poles voted for Roosevelt and Debs in 1912. The bitterness felt at the strife between worker and employer affected them just as much as any other worker. This is demonstrated by the number of Poles who voted for the Socialists at the general election of 1912. Edward Kantowicz noted:

> The Socialists, despite the usual opposition from the Catholic church and the Polish nationalist leaders, gained almost 11 percent of the Polish vote, comparable to Debs' 12.5 percent city wide. In some Polish precincts around the steel mills of South Chicago, the Democratic vote dipped to 30 percent and the Debs' tally rose to nearly 20 percent.

There was no automatic Polish allegiance to the Democrats, for in 1912 Poles had been suspicious of Wilson. In 1916 war conditions swung them behind him, but in 1920 the tide of 'normalcy' saw Harding receive almost as much Polish support as Cox.[50]

Nor was it just at a national level that a substantial number of Poles voted Republican. In the 1915 Mayoral election the 45.9 per cent who voted for Thompson played their part in electing a Republican. However, Thompson so alienated his Polish supporters with his views on the League of Nations that in 1919 his share of their vote dropped below 14 per cent. Fitzpatrick got 16 per cent of the Polish city-wide vote, double the percentage of the electorate taken as a whole. Fitzpatrick did particularly well in two wards near the stockyards, with 27.5 per cent of the Polish vote in the 4th and 18.7 per cent in the 29th. In the 17th ward only 8.8 per cent of Poles voted for Fitzpatrick, yet it was here that the CCLP stood the Polish journalist Anielewski. This suggests that Poles did not vote purely on ethnic lines, as Fitzpatrick had performed better in wards without Polish candidates. In other words, for many Poles class was a more important factor in voting behaviour than national origin. Of course the majority of Poles had voted Democrat, but in 1919 this was not inevitable. Indeed, in some instances Poles gave more support to working-class organizations than the population around them.[51]

THE IRISH

The Irish had strong associations with the Democratic Party in Chicago, and in wards where the Irish predominated they usually made up the majority of its committeemen. However, the Republicans had their share of Irish activists too on the City Committee. It was a close race between the Irish and native Protestants as to who dominated with the Irish having the narrow edge. In the Democratic Party the Irish drew strength from alliances with other Catholics, such as Poles and Italians. This alliance should have made the Party invincible; if it had not split in the 1919 mayoral election the total of united Democrat votes would have been 50.5 per cent, far in excess of Thompson's 37.6 per cent.[52]

However, it would be a mistake to assume that Chicago voting patterns were solidly Democratic by 1919. Catholic voters were not a monolith, nor were they voting fodder for any particular party. Indeed, only four years earlier Thompson had got a majority that had included many Catholic voters. Between 1915 and 1919 many Polish voters

swung away from the Republican Party, or at least from Thompson in particular. For some Irish the pendulum briefly swung the other way as they became disillusioned with Wilson's foreign policy. In Chicago, Irish-American meetings drew crowds of between 40 000 and 70 000, ready to attack Wilson's administration if it failed to grant self-determination to Ireland. Fitzpatrick and his supporters, aware of growing Irish discontent, campaigned vigorously around the issue of self-determination. In the stockyards a meeting of 8000 voted unanimously to demand recognition of the Irish Republic. A black butcher workmen's local passed a similar resolution. Walsh also procured Irish support, placing an article in favour of Fitzpatrick's mayoral campaign in *America*, a weekly Catholic review. The *Irish Press* of Philadelphia also had an article on the campaign, accompanied by a picture of Fitzpatrick.[53]

Relations between the CCLP and various Irish groupings were friendly. Fitzpatrick was prominent on the platforms of the Friends of Irish Freedom. The Chicago Local Council of Friends of Irish Freedom endorsed the action of the Farmer Labor Party for having included in its platform a demand for recognition of the Republic of Ireland. De Valera also endorsed the Labor Party. There is no evidence of widespread hostility from Irish Nationalists or the Catholic Church. Indeed, if there was any hostility it was often reserved for Wilson. However, friendliness towards the FLP did not necessarily transform into votes. Those Irish concerned with the Nationalist cause were seeking great-power intervention on Ireland's behalf. The Democrats were refusing to provide it, and the fledgling FLP, though willing, lacked the wherewithal to do so. The logic of this for the Friends of Irish Freedom was that the Republicans were the best party for Irish Independence.[54]

The *Majority* claimed that the Nationalist Irish voted Republican in the 1920 Presidential election to revenge themselves on Wilson. Less than a quarter of Chicago's population voted Democrat in that year's presidential election. The Polish did vote disproportionately Democrat (50.4 per cent in all), but this was a major drop from the 70.5 per cent who voted Democrat in 1916. Thus the Polish figures prove that many of Chicago's Catholic voters switched allegiance in 1920. The switch may have been greater among the Irish as they were far more dissatisfied with the Democrats' foreign policy than the Poles. Nonetheless national issues affected Poles to almost the same degree as most Americans. It is clear, from the above, that immigrant or Catholic workers were no more hostile to the FLP than workers of different

origin or religion. Indeed, in some areas the opposite was the case. Thus the failure of the party had more to do with its general inability to win workers as a whole than with its appeal to specific religious or ethnic groupings. However, this was not the case with black workers where the failure had far deeper and more specific roots.[55]

CONCLUSIONS

Though labour's vote in Chicago was not as impressive as that in Seattle the mayoral result was still a reasonably good start. Electoral support was more substantial in areas where the unions were strongest. But to enthusiastic supporters with high expectations the vote received was less than satisfactory. The vote could possibly have been higher, but many factors militated against it. Fitzpatrick dominated the CFL, but at the local level this did not always turn into real commitment. For even the pro-Labor Party Illinois miners were reluctant to break union rules and pay official dues to the party. The pro-Gompers' newspaper, the *Unionist*, had more resources than the *Majority* and was able to issue vast numbers at election time. The *Majority* did not have a large circulation and never became a daily newspaper. Thus the CFL's influence never spread much further than its immediate activists. The political machines that the CCLP faced were, to an extent, as powerful as Tammany. The CCLP did not face one powerful party machine but two. Unlike the Seattle experience, none of the major parties disintegrated. The Seattle FLP had only faced a well-organized Republican party, having won over much of the Democrats' membership and resources. If the CCLP had been capable of more input across the whole of Chicago, it might have been able to get even more votes. Nonetheless in areas where the unions had influence the party did reasonably well. This raises the question as to why the CCLP was unable to relate to these areas of strength and build on them?

Instead, after the mayoral election, the Party went into decline; several factors explain this and one was the Party's organic link to organized workers. In concrete terms that link meant local union officials who were loyal to the party. It was they who turned trade-union loyalty of the workers they represented into political support. However, the loyalty of these officials was first and foremost to the union. When the time required to build the party conflicted with union demands it was the latter that came first. This was not always a political decision. For many it was a pragmatic decision forced on them by the need to defend union organization. In particular for W. Z. Foster and his allies, industrial unionism was far more important than building the CCLP; whatever the motive, syndicalist and progressive trade unionists behaved alike for different reasons. The obligations of party officials to union duties reinforced the sectionalist aspect of trade unionism at the expense of the political.

At the same time Chicago's 'federated unionism' was unable to include most of the unskilled. The CFL did try to compensate for this by having organizing campaigns in steel and meatpacking. This diverted resources and personnel away from building the Party. This over-dependence on the workplace and the lack of any community-based machine meant that at times of struggle the Party took second place. The *Majority* did not ignore workplace struggles; it regularly covered strikes. When it came to African-Americans, the CCLP did not ignore them as workers. It was in the field of community politics and civil rights that the party failed. This was a sort of unconscious syndicalism by those who believed in political action.

Fitzpatrick challenged such syndicalism in its more open form, for instance forcing Foster to put Labor Party propaganda in the Steel Bulletin. However, for the most part, trade union activity and politics remained separate. The progressives were aware that a stronger union movement would help overcome divisions in the working class and help build the FLP. In practice this was proved by the CCLP's better results in wards where unions and community coincided. Unfortunately the unions' campaigns to extend and generalize membership were defeated. Of course the defeats were partly the result of the narrow craft unionism of the national leaders of the AFL, but that does not change the fact that these defeats weakened Chicago labour. Enormous effort and expense went into industrial campaigns that affected far more workers than the April electoral campaign. Industrial defeat followed the electoral failures of 1919. Having failed to make electoral capital out of the 1919 election, industrial defeat undermined the confidence of Chicago workers to pursue independent political activity even further. One defeat had reinforced another.

In Seattle the electoral road opened in the wake of the industrial defeat. Bitterness at defeat channelled into the desire to win justice at the polls. As the following chapter on Seattle will demonstrate, local conditions there combined to make a belated electoral intervention very successful. In Chicago, labour was aware of its electoral weakness but failed to win an industrial battle that could have strengthened it politically. In 1912 and 1919, working-class parties had won significant

minority ethnic support, with the vote concentrated in areas where organized workplaces predominated. In wards next to the packing-houses and steel mills, community and workplace had merged to give labour a stronger political impact. By the end of 1920 unionization had suffered a serious setback in these areas, and labour's vote dropped. With Chicago's labour weakened by industrial and electoral defeats, its ability to appear as a credible alternative also weakened. Neither was it the case, as shown above, that Chicago's Catholics were hostile to the CFL and the CCLP. But with prospects for change diminishing in 1920 for some Irish and Poles, overseas national aspirations became the imperative. Therefore industrial defeat became a serious blow, not only to trade-union organization, but also to the possibility of spreading workers' independent politics. Perhaps at a more fortuitous time Fitzpatrick's vote could have been the beginning of a growing movement, but events conspired to see a 'good start' stall and lead nowhere.

4 A Long and Winding Road: Seattle 1918–20

Seattle labour was the last of the three movements to form a labour party, yet electorally it was the most successful. In the Fall of 1920 the party averaged 31 per cent of the vote in King County, the electoral area for Seattle, pushing the Democrats into third place. For one historian of the Seattle Farmer Labor Party (FLP) its failure to transform itself into a party capable of winning a majority is central to his analysis. Splits in the trade-union leadership and the problem of the alienation of Catholic and anti-prohibition voters are cited as major reasons for electoral failure. Unemployment and the open-shop campaign, as explanations, receive less attention. This approach will not be dealt with in specific detail at this point; rather this chapter will commence with a different line of enquiry: why did the FLP in Seattle do so well?[1]

The answer to this crucial question will also add to a deeper understanding of the successes and failures of the Chicago and New York labour movements. This chapter will also evaluate how it was possible for a party, only a few months old, to do so well at the polls, and why it did not do even better. To do that it will also be necessary to consider factors beyond the control of labour.

Though the Seattle Central Labor Council (SCLC) was the last of the three city central bodies to form a labour party, it was no stranger to independent political action. It had a tradition of supporting union men for local council and municipal elections. Even before the first FLP candidate stood, Seattle had labour councillors. Part of the reason for this success was the specific nature of Seattle municipal elections. Since 1911 elections took place on a non-partisan basis; this meant that candidates stood as individuals rather than as party nominees. Parties could not campaign for, or finance, candidates for mayoral or council elections. However, it was no secret who organized labour or who big business supported. Also the procedure for nomination was far easier than that of New York or Chicago; thousands of signatures were not required to get on the ballot. This meant that Seattle labour candidates did not suffer the kind of obstruction faced by New York and Chicago candidates.[2]

From 1918 onwards labour candidates also had the support of a daily newspaper, the *Seattle Union Record*. However, it was not until

CHAPTER IV

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION, WHY NOT?

John Fitzpatrick was nationally recognized for his political activities. His political views grew out of his humanitarianism and his desire to counterbalance industry. They were given best expression in the labor party movement after 1917. Fitzpatrick was one of the most important leaders of the Labor Party. Well known at the local level as an uncompromising champion of the workers, he had a similar national reputation from his leadership of the organizing drives and strikes in the meat-packing and steel industries. He helped originate the party and its program, both locally and nationally; he was a member of the local, state, and national executive committees; he was the party's candidate for mayor of Chicago in the first significant race it entered; and he ran for Senator from Illinois the following year. Moreover, he set the tone of the most important national conventions by giving the keynote addresses in both 1919 and 1920, and he had useful connections with non-labor reformers. His political program met much the same opposition from within and without the labor movement as did his economic campaigns.

Fitzpatrick wished to bring a greater share of the promise of American life to the working people as rapidly

as possible, whether they were unionized or not. There is no better example of this desire than his remarks in defense of a resolution favoring an eight-hour law which he had introduced before the 1915 AFL convention. He asked how labor could overlook "women and children that [were] not in the factories and the workships?" Most depended upon unorganized workmen for their livelihoods. If the AFL could organize these millions of men, he said, "and after you have them organized let them cut down their hours and in that way you are going to bring the eight-hour day into their lives, all right; but life is too short. We are not Methusalas in this day and age . . . ; we die off pretty early and the term of our lives is shortened because we are so brutally used in these industries and occupations." Labor could no longer ignore the families who suffered because of the long hours and low wages of their providers, and Fitzpatrick was amazed that "we are not going to make one move politically in that situation." He cautioned that "when you take into consideration the millions of men in industries we cannot reach, and then say to them that we are going to prevent them from doing anything to change that situation until we are able to reach them industrially, they will not be satisfied."[1]

His experiences compelled him to think beyond the AFL's independent yeomanry[2] of skilled workers, protected as much by

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[1] AFL Proceedings, 1915, p. 488.

[2] The term "yeomanry" seems to be more accurate than the traditional "aristocracy" of skilled workers. In a complete industrial complex the latter term belongs to the employers.

their skills as by their membership in an AFL union, to that larger less fortunate group of unskilled laborers who would profit most if labor strongly influenced or controlled government. In 1911 Raymond Robins described Fitzpatrick as, "A genuine progressive, he believes in labor legislation and the direct political action of the workers."[3] Fitzpatrick considered the decade following 1915 as a period when "the labor movement had its chance to shape its own course by adopting an aggressive policy and pushing itself into every situation." In these years, he said, "we had our opportunity, by a peaceful, a lawful, an American method, to take the power of the government into our own hands."[4]

To Samuel Gompers, Fitzpatrick's views were heretical. Gompers harbored a fundamental suspicion of the state which he revealed to Fitzpatrick during their 1915 debate on the eight-hour law. "There never was a government in the history of the world," Gompers said, "and there is not one today that when a critical moment came, did not exercise tyranny over the people."[5] Several months earlier Gompers had sent Fitzpatrick a packet of articles that explained the stand the AFL had taken on political action. The articles contained Gompers' political philosophy: first, avoid involvement in partisan politics and

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[3]Raymond Robins, "John Fitzpatrick, A Leader of Organized Labor in the West," Life and Labor, I (February, 1911), p. 42.

[4]John Fitzpatrick, "Our Successes and Failures," NM, September 3, 1921, p. 5.

[5]AFL Proceedings, 1915, pp. 502-503.

follow a policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies" on the major party tickets; second, refrain from independent political action at all costs; and, third, subordinate political to economic action. "I am sure," Gompers wrote the doubtful Fitzpatrick, "that with a fair reading and understanding of these documents you will be in a position to meet any opponent or adverse critic of the trade union movement and justify upon every ground the fundamental work and principles, struggles, achievements and ideals of the American Federation of Labor."[6]

Shortly after Gompers reminded Fitzpatrick of the political obligations of a member and employee of the AFL, Fitzpatrick was engaged in the formation of a labor party, thereby demonstrating his disapproval of the accepted political policies of the national federation. The history of his activities as a major figure in this movement clarifies the motivations and purposes of those who fostered independent labor politics, as well as the limitations imposed upon such men by three factors: the type and quality of potentially available cooperating groups; the inertia of the rank and file; and the obstacles presented by hostile, powerful groups within the AFL.

The clash in 1915 over the eight-hour law was the first step in the political separation between Gompers and Fitzpatrick. The latter had been instructed by the IFL to present a resolution for an eight-hour law at the AFL convention. Fitzpatrick's

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[6]Gompers to Fitzpatrick, June 9, 1915, Gompers Papers.

convictions on this subject always strong, were strengthened by the fact that the IFL, prior to its resolution, had voted to introduce a similar law in the Illinois Legislature. Fitzpatrick felt that he spoke for "the principles of the organized labor movement in the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago."[7]

Accordingly, Fitzpatrick called "for the eight-hour day by legislation, both industrially and politically." The Executive Committee of the AFL countered with a resolution for the eight-hour day "through trade-union activity, and not . . . through legislative enactment." One of the articles that Gompers had forwarded six months earlier had emphasized that the AFL convention in 1914 had decided against realizing the eight-hour day by legislation. Fitzpatrick contended that he could still declare for an "eight-hour day, either through legislation, industrially or any other way, as long as it can be brought within the reach of the workers." If narrow ideological differences prevented it, he warned that many city and state central bodies would be "absolutely in contradiction to the plan and purpose of the American Federation of Labor." This stand would only "divide labor's forces" though "the Federation's purpose is to bring the men and women closer together, that we may make sacrifices in one another's interests." Hitting at the basic

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[7] IFL Proceedings, 1916, p. 320. Fitzpatrick told the 1906 Horseshoer's convention that the eight-hour day "must come from the law-making bodies, national, state and city, and judges must be selected for the bench who are in sympathy with and who understand the ideals of the American laborers." Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the International Union of Journeymen Horseshoers of the United States and Canada, 1906, p. 63.

weakness of the AFL as he saw it, Fitzpatrick cautioned, "When you raise a false issue in matters of this kind the fellows who are selfish and who allow selfishness to actuate them will step out of the fight and save what they have got. That is not doing the thing we ought to do or doing it in the way it ought to be done."[8]

Gompers was intractable. He attacked Fitzpatrick on the authenticity of the number of people the latter claimed came under the organizational influence of the AFL, accusing him of "repeating the accusations made by the worst enemies of our movement." When Fitzpatrick protested, Gompers called forth his best paternalistic image and falsely retorted, "I think I said Delegate Fitzpatrick innocently used the argument of his enemies." Wishing to show Fitzpatrick's singular commitment to trade-union action, Gompers quoted a letter in which the delegate had recounted some local victories, stating that "what we failed to get by law we got through our trade unions." Instead of making his point, however, Gompers underlined Fitzpatrick's determination to employ either political or economic action to realize his all-important goals. When a roll-call vote resulted in 6,396 votes for Fitzpatrick's resolution, and 8,500 against, with 4,061 votes not cast, it was apparent that only Gompers' towering prestige had saved him.[9] One scholar

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[8]AFL Proceedings, 1915, pp. 274, 485, 487.

[9]Ibid., pp. 499, 505, 501; Fitzpatrick to Gompers, August 4, 1915, Fitzpatrick Papers. Buck states that Fitzpatrick

concludes, "It is obvious that the report was adopted by a minority, and that many delegates refrained from voting so as not to inflict a severe defeat upon Gompers. The large negative vote in part indicated the growing opposition to the established views of the Executive Council, including Gompers."[10] It also demonstrates that Fitzpatrick might have expected substantial labor support for more ambitious political programs had he chosen to initiate them.

He reported to the IFL that it did not "make him pessimistic to meet defeat. I realize now more fully than before," he continued, "the necessity for the change of program demanded by the rank and file, and what may seem to be chaffing is only a desire to overcome tactics and methods which absolutely deny free and open and democratic spirit which should obtain in every gathering of workers." He stated that his belief in "certain fundamental propositions is strengthened, and whatever opposition we had does not discourage nor dishearten, it only stimulates and strengthens our own faith that wrong will not and cannot survive." With a growing difference between the desires of the rank and file and those of the AFL, he said "I know of no inducement on the face of this earth which would deter me from fulfilling my obligation to my fellow workers, and if I have carried out your intentions . . . my measure is full and overflowing."[11]

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reacted to Gompers' accusation of using the arguments of labor's enemies by charging to the platform and shouting, "Sam, that's a goddam lie!" Buck to the author, September 10, 1962.

[10]Philip Taft, AFL and Gompers, p. 148.

[11]"Official Report of John Fitzpatrick, Delegate to the

Neither did Fitzpatrick's defeat change his mind about the desirability of increasing labor's political involvement. By 1918 the support that he was able to muster against Gompers on the eight-hour law, combined with new pressures, convinced him that a labor party could present a broad enough appeal to win significant victories for the American worker. The five most important forces contributing to Fitzpatrick's decision were: the uncompromising use of the injunction against labor; the heady initial effect of the Russian Revolution upon many progressive Americans; the successes of the British Labor Party; labor's increasing self-consciousness resulting from its economic victories and its political recognition, however superficial, during recent years; and, finally, the influence of people around Fitzpatrick urging him to take any opportunity for independent political action.

Injunctions were smothering labor's economic programs. In August, 1917, the Circuit Court of Cook County named Fitzpatrick and Nockels in a typically inclusive writ of injunction issued against a machinists' strike in Chicago. This document forbade those named to interfere in any way with the employees of the complainant. Specifically it included such activities as picketing, spying, threatening, soliciting employees to join the strike, "addressing to any . . . employees words imparting hatred, criticism, censure, scorn, disgust, humiliation or annoyance because of their employment by the complainant," and "distributing handbills, cards, or other printed matter among

employees."[12] Two months later the CFL urged voters to support the judicial candidates of the Socialist Party, thus protesting "the usurpation of fundamental rights of free citizens by injunction judges owned and controlled by the manufacturers associations and corporations."[13] "It is folly," the editor of the International Molders Journal wrote to Fitzpatrick, "to spend $50,000 or $100,000 in a strike . . . when a decision of the Judge can overthrow all that the strikers are able to accomplish."[14] Fitzpatrick's papers contain a resolution in his own hand, presumably introduced in the CFL, calling for the repeal of the "act whereby the Supreme Court was established" because of its decisions in two earlier boycott cases--the Hatters' Case and the Buck Stove and Range Case.[15] It was an expression of ignorance or anger, not revolution.

Similarly, Fitzpatrick had frequent cause to complain that local, state, and national law officers were being used as strike breakers. In one instance a president of a struck company had a number of his men deputized as United States Marshals to discourage work stoppage. Protesting, Fitzpatrick wrote Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson,

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[12]"Writ of Injunction Issued by the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, August Term, 1917, in the case of Morkrum Company versus Philip Renisch, et. al.," Fitzpatrick Papers.

[13]Minutes of CFL, October 21, 1917.

[14]John P. Frey to Fitzpatrick, July 9, 1917, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[15]Loewe v. Lawler, 208 U.S. 274 (1908); Gompers v. Buck Stove and Range Company, 221 U.S. 418 (1907).

> . . . we are not complaining against the use of the police force, the sheriff's office, the state militia, the United States Marshal or the federal troops to protect property or preserve the peace, but we do complain . . . against the Department of Justice being used to clothe the officials of this or any company (and there are others thus clothed in Chicago) for the purpose of intimidating, threatening or coercing their employees from engaging in any lawful undertaking or exercising their citizenship rights.[16]

In other parts of the world certain events helped to ameliorate despair. One writer expressed labor's hopes in observing that "the Taff Vale case [in Great Britain] led to the formation of the British Labour Party, the election of labor representatives to Parliament and the passage of the trades disputes act, which protected the unions from attack in the courts." Was it not possible that excessive repression by the judiciary might result in similar actions in the United States?[17]

Labor also welcomed the Russian Revolution as a manifestation of world-wide social change for the benefit of the working class. Matthew Woll, conservative official of the AFL, greeted "the destruction of the Russian autocracy and the substitution of democracy [as] a world's accomplishment worthy of the supreme sacrifice of mankind."[18] The words "new majority," the title of the weekly paper of the CFL which was the voice of the Labor Party from 1919 to 1924, can be roughly translated into Russian

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[16]Fitzpatrick to W. B. Wilson, July 30, 1917, in WN, August 11, 1917, p. 4.

[17]John Fitch, "Labor and Politics, How the War and the Courts are Upsetting the Traditional Attitude of American Trade Unions," The Survey, XL (June 8, 1918), 289.

[18]WN, September 1, 1917, p. 1.

as Bolshevik.[19] And in 1920 Fitzpatrick opened a national party convention with the hope "that the day was only near when the workers in the United States would be able to concentrate their efforts and do a job such as Russia has done (prolonged cheering and vociferous applause)."[20] To Fitzpatrick, the Russian Revolution symbolized the results which the workers could obtain by exhibiting determined and united strength in continued struggle against the repression of a hostile government.

Another source of optimism to politically minded labor leaders was the success of the British Labour Party. In 1918 it increased its seats in Parliament from 35 to 59, and it drew up a reconstruction program that received wide publicity in American liberal journals. Fitzpatrick's labor party later adopted it in large part as its own. "Because the British Labour Party is looming up so prominently in British affairs," one journalist observed in 1918, "the question is being seriously asked by many labor men in this country, why the labor movement here cannot be equally strong as a political factor."[21]

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[19] John M. Glenn, the editor of the Manufacturers' News and an agent of the Illinois Manufacturers Association, took delight in the fact that labor was thus identifying itself with the Bolsheviks. NM, January 25, 1919, p. 4. The New Russian constitution was printed in ibid., January 8, 1919, pp. 3, 14-15

[20] NM, July 17, 1920, p. 6. Ireland's fight for freedom was also used as a symbol by the Labor Party men. "I happen to be a Sinn Feiner," Fitzpatrick told the delegates to the 1920 convention, and he proudly pointed out that "in the face of the British Empire the Irish people have stood up and set up their own Irish Republic." Could not the American workers act similar Ibid.

[21] John Fitch, "Labor and Politics," The Survey, XL

Also, the events of the war increased labor's awareness of the possibilities of political action. By appealing to their workers' patriotism and loyalty, the steel magnates had stimulated not only greater production but also labor's sense of its political power.[22] Labor men had been appointed to administrative boards in Washington; Gompers was prominent on the Council of National Defense, and labor and capital were equally represented on the War Labor Board. In 1916, Fitzpatrick felt that Woodrow Wilson's "reelection means the realization of the hope for the future of the common people and is the only hope for the establishment and perpetuation of a nation of free men and women."[23] But his enthusiasm was soon qualified, paralleling his attitude toward governmental interference in economic matters, by the administration's record in suppressing civil liberties and by its favorable response to industrial interests. Neither major party could be trusted to support labor. In addition, initial economic successes in organizing the packing and steel industries created general optimism among the workers, making a labor party "a forward movement, a part of the offensive that produced the steel strike."[24]

Finally, friends encouraged Fitzpatrick to channel and to lead labor's new-found sense of political importance. One

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[22]Brody, Steelworkers, pp. 190-198.

[23]Fitzpatrick to Raymond Robins [n.d.], Fitzpatrick Papers

[24]Eugene Staley, History of the Illinois State Federation of Labor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 352.

reminded him "that organized labor is growing into a solidarity . . . and that solidarity will end in a political body or movement." Fitzpatrick was advised to increase his knowledge of socialism, for "the labor leaders who understand the fundamental principles of Socialism in addition to their own movement, can retain the lead, and command the utter confidence and respect of not only their own membership, but that of socialists, I. W. W. people for that matter." Should a labor party be formed, Fitzpatrick was urged to "get in right at the beginning."[25] From discussion with Buck and other intimates, Fitzpatrick became "a genuine advocate of political action through a new Labor Party."[26]

The CFL had made unsuccessful attempts to initiate a labor party in 1905, 1905, 1908, and 1910.[27] But new forces led the city central, on October 6, 1918, to request the president of the state federation to "call a convention in the immediate future for the purpose of considering the advisability of forming in Illinois an independent labor party along lines of the British Labor Party but adopted to American conditions."[28]

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[25]Nellie Baldwin to Fitzpatrick, July 1, 1917, July 28, 1917, September 7, 1917; W. E. Jones to Fitzpatrick, March 12, 1917, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[26]Buck to the author, February 1, 1963.

[27]Truman C. Bigham, "The Chicago Federation of Labor" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1924), pp. 102-110 has a list of the major political resolutions of the CFL, 1906 to 1922.

[28]Minutes of CFL, November 17, 1918.

Fitzpatrick assisted Frank Walsh and others in formulating procedural plans and a platform which were presented to the CFL and enthusiastically adopted November 17, 1918.[29] A copy of Labor's Fourteen Points, the platform of the new party, was published by The Survey, under the signatures of Fitzpatrick and Nockels.[30]

The next step was to seek state-wide support. During the first week of December a resolution was adopted at the IFL convention to form an "Independent Labor Party for the State of Illinois," adopting Labor's Fourteen Points as a platform.[31] The results of a referendum of the affiliated unions on the resolution showed 341 organizations in favor, 38 against, with 1 tie. Of individual votes recorded, 22,722 were for and 2,561 against.[32] Although the vote seemingly demonstrated great sentiment for a labor party, it totalled considerably less than the half-million Illinois workmen whom Fitzpatrick and the president of the IFL claimed to represent.

Nockels, expressing the hopes of the leaders, declared that labor could point to thirty years of political failure under the AFL's non-partisan policy. Lacking initiative and

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[29] Ibid.

[30] The Survey, XLI (November 30, 1918), 265; NM, January 18, 1919, pp. 8-9 has the Fourteen Points, the City Platform, and the Constitution of the Labor Party.

[31] IFL Proceedings, 1918, pp. 134-159.

[32] WN, February 1, February 8, February 15, February 22, March 1, March 8, 1919.

the opportunity for positive action, the supporters of that sterile doctrine could only approach the halls of government whimpering, "We will pledge you our support if you do what we ask you to do. We will lend you the labor movement, we will deliver the labor movement to you." It had been demonstrated, however, that "we cannot deliver to the democrats, we cannot deliver to the republicans, and we cannot deliver to the socialists. Now we have a right to see if we can deliver to ourselves."[33] And Fitzpatrick spoke of "an opportunity that comes but once in a lifetime," an opportunity for labor "to become a political force on its own account and for the benefit of the working people and their families."[34]

The specific goals of the new party are expressed in Labor's Fourteen Points and in the local Chicago platform. The fourteen points can be divided into two groups, the rights of labor and the responsibilities of government. Labor wished to increase its voice in society and to counterbalance "private interests or bureaucratic agents of government." It could do this only by achieving its rights to organize and bargain collectively, to work an eight-hour day for a minimum wage, and to expect equal treatment for men and women in industry and government. Labor demanded equal representation in all departments of government, especially those involved in demobilization and reconstruction, representation at the peace conference, a larger

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[33] IFL Proceedings, 1918, pp. 143-144.

[34] NM, January 4, 1919, p. 2.

voice in determining the methods, policies, and programs of public education, and a League of Workers as a supplement to the League of Nations to guarantee disarmament and to maintain or work toward open diplomacy and peace.

The platform held that the government should abolish unemployment through public work projects during depression periods. In addition it should lower the cost of living by controlling "profiteering" in all phases of production and distribution; extend soldiers' and sailors' insurance, including accident and illness, to all citizens; expedite the payment of the war debt by taxing inheritance, incomes, and land values; and restore free speech, free assemblage, and the free press. Finally, the government should nationalize and develop natural resources and adopt a policy of public ownership of public utilities.[35] Admittedly, Fitzpatrick subscribed to this platform. But no evidence suggests more than this vague commitment to nationalization.

The city platform was "organized to establish genuine democracy in all public affairs" by breaking "the power of rapacious public utility corporations, greedy big business interests and reactionary newspapers which now dominate our civic life." "Big Business" was held responsible for high gas bills, exorbitant elevated and surface car transportation charges, an anti-labor school board, anti-strike police department and courts,

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[35]Independent Labor Party Platform.

high taxes for the poor, and the distortions of truth in the Chicago daily papers. To correct these inequities the party demanded "municipal ownership and operation of all public utilities," democracy in the public education system, "full recognition of Union Labor in all departments of the City Government," shorter hours for city workers, abolition of the contract system in public projects, and the neutrality of the police in industrial disputes. The municipality should clear the slums and inaugurate public housing projects, and it should improve sanitation by electrifying steam railways in order to eliminate dust, by regularizing garbage collection, and by building playgrounds and forest preserves. The city should readjust the tax system to put a greater burden on the wealthy. Home rule for Chicago was demanded "so that the people of this city may settle their local problems and manage their local government without outside interference." The initiative, referendum, and recall were to be instituted as a final check upon the government.[36] At some time during Fitzpatrick's presidency, the CFL had resolved in favor of most of these measures.[37]

Public ownership of transportation was never a doctrinaire

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[36]City Platform of the Labor Party.

[37]Truman C. Bigham, "The Chicago Federation of Labor," pp. 102-110. Fitzpatrick had introduced a resolution in the 1907 AFL convention stating that "it is . . . the power and the duty and the responsibility of the United States government to start at once public works to provide work" for the unemployed. Horseshoers Monthly Magazine, January, 1908, p. 20.

commitment for Fitzpatrick. His purpose is illustrated by his views on the municipal ownership of the streetcar system. In his opinion

> . . . municipal ownership and operation . . . is the only practical solution to the problem, but to urge this as a remedy for the present vicious and incompetent service would be pure bunk and to urge the construction of a subway is only prolonging the agony. Neither of these plans is possible within the next five or ten years. What the people want is immediate relief.[38]

He never considered overthrowing the established system of government, and he opposed

> . . . the plans of those who would destroy our entire civilization at one blow in the hope of bettering the conditions of the masses. . . . [Labor's program] is not a visionary programme; it is not the picture of a Utopia to be realized in the far-distant future. It is what labor demands now, and those who wish to avoid the excesses and dangers of a violent and bitter upheaval can do nothing better than to acknowledge its true conservatism and aid organized labor in putting it into practice.

He was convinced that the Labor Party was following "a course that will conserve the good while eliminating the bad in our present social and economic order."[39]

Robert Buck also stressed the fact that the Party was non-revolutionary. Its goal, he said, "is to induce all exploited groups to arise in their political might to throw off the exploiters." The desire of "the exploited" was "by peaceful political action, [to] be able to recapture their government from the control of the exploiters and begin to run it for

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[38] NM, March 15, 1919, p. 6.

[39] John Fitzpatrick, "The Bishops' Labor Programme," The National Catholic War Council Bulletin, I, No. 2 (July, 1919), 9.

the ninety per cent" who were being denied the right of self-government. Buck's overstatement was, of course, a protest against labor's unequal voice in government. Central to Buck's thinking was "the plank [of Labor's Fourteen Points] which reads: 'the right of labor to an increasing share in the responsibilities and management of industry; application of this principle to be developed in accordance with actual operation.' This is the party's demand for industrial freedom. . . ."[40] The Labor Party advocated "a pragmatic eclecticism of program, free from commitments to any integrated social philosophy."[41] The general end was similar to the goal of Fitzpatrick's economic program: to raise labor to a position to counterbalance industry in American society.

According to Fitzpatrick, relief from the evils listed in the Chicago platform could be gained for labor's "new majority" by removing the "time-servers of Big Business" and by replacing them with laborers or workers. Honest and efficient administration of existing ordinances would suffice for awhile. "If you want a thing done well," he said, "the best way is to do it yourself."[42] As early as 1915, Fitzpatrick had told the Commission on Industrial Relations;

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[40]Robert M. Buck, "The Farmer-Labor Party," The Nation, CXI (August 7, 1920), 156. By "industrial freedom" Buck meant effective collective bargaining.

[41]J. B. S. Hardman, "Labor Parties--General," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1930-1934, VII, 697.

[42]NM, March 15, 1919, p. 6; NM, March 22, 1919, p. 11.

> I think the unrest which exists among the workers, both organized and unorganized, is the control which big business has over not only industrial affairs but public affairs; that grip which they have on the affairs of government and which they use against the workers continuously and everlastingly causes . . . an unrest among the workers to get from under that--that control, that holding down, which they have held for so long.

At the time he was not sure how the workers could break this hold.[43] Now the Labor Party gave them the means.

Fitzpatrick was a moderate, not a Socialist. His stand on the First World War suggests his position. He was not a member of Gompers' super-patriotic American Association for Labor and Democracy. There never was a Chicago branch of this organization which had been formed to rally union support for the war effort, but at the same time Fitzpatrick had little sympathy for the Socialist Peoples Council of America, a pacifist organization.[44] His campaign biography in the New Majority states that he "took an active part in war work, leading the Federation in standing by the government in the war, regardless of consequences, until victory was achieved. He was appointed a member of District No. 3, Exemption Boards, in the selective draft service. He also participated in Liberty loan, Red Cross and war savings stamp drives." His papers support this blurb. Fitzpatrick wanted an American victory in the war, but unlike

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[43] CIR, p. 3285.

[44] Robert Maisel to Gompers, October 11, 1917, Fitzpatrick to Maisel, April 11, 1918, Gompers Papers; see also Frank L. Grubbs, "The American Alliance for Labor and Democracy" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1960); Grubbs to the author, August 10, 1962.

Gompers he would not accept a government position.[45] He wished to remain independent to acquire gains for the workers while the war was in progress.[46]

Fitzpatrick employed politics to bring labor to a position equivalent to industry in American society. He was described at a political rally by one observer who hoped to assist "the future historian of our time to get the feel and sense of such men as Fitzpatrick--brawny, hairy, straight speaking, florid, one-ideaed and terribly in earnest, men who, one-ideaed as they are, still have an idea that is a generation or so in advance of your and my ideas."[47] He rarely dwelt on ideology when speaking for the party. Instead, he resorted to story telling, delving into his wide labor experience for material. He would describe in familiar terms the wretched conditions imposed by industry upon the workers, urging them to "take over this situation and operate it in the interests of men, women and children as against its being manipulated in the interest of finance, commerce and Big Business interests." As a politician, Fitzpatrick was a humanitarian and pragmatic individual exhibiting "zeal for the worker and . . . . sympathy with the victims of

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[45] NM, January 18, p. 7.

[46] Like Andrew Furuseth of the Seamen's Union, Fitzpatrick's "primary difference with Gompers . . . concerned the disposition of labor to promise everything in support of the war without receiving anything in return." Hyman Weintraub, Andrew Furuseth, Emancipator of the Seamen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 145.

[47] James O'Donnell Bennett, "A Sketch," reprinted from Chicago Tribune, in NM, March 29, 1919, p. 6.

heartless industry."[48]

The Cook County Labor Party was organized on December 29, 1918; the Illinois State Labor Party was formed on April 12, 1919; and these two initiated the drive which led to the formation of the National Labor Party of the United States on November 22, 1919. Their attempts to win support illustrate the difficulties in institutionalizing independent labor politics. The Chicago mayoralty campaign in 1919 provided an early example. On January 12, 1919, Fitzpatrick was nominated for mayor of Chicago by the Cook County Labor Party. He promised to conduct a vigorous campaign, to uphold the general goals of the party, and to accept no contributions from "business men or those who have personal ambitions" which he held to be "nothing else but . . . blood money ground out of the lives of the toilers."[49] This was the only campaign in which the party concentrated exclusively upon gaining labor support. The approach was primarily through the local unions, and speakers appeared before as many meetings as possible to explain the party program. As early as January 4, 1919, the New Majority claimed that 170 local unions with a total membership of 150,000 had endorsed the party. Fitzpatrick addressed a meeting of 5,000 Amalgamated Clothing Workers, received the personal endorsement of Sidney Hillman, and accepted a $500.00 donation

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[48] NM, March 8, 1919, p. 2, November 29, 1919, p. 3; First National Convention of the Labor Party of the United States, Proceedings, 1919, pp. 4, 10.

[49] NM, January 4, 1919, p. 2.

to the campaign fund. Similarly, Frank Walsh endorsed Fitzpatrick's candidacy before a meeting of 8,000 workers.[50]

The labor leaders did make a special appeal to the returning veterans. A resolution was passed by the party to select a committee of soldiers, sailors, and workingmen "to deal with the problems of the returned soldiers and sailors, and to promote their cooperation with the workers of Chicago for the advancement of political and industrial democracy at home."[51] But former servicemen had no single political philosophy to which the party might appeal.

Though Fitzpatrick and his supporters campaigned vigorously, he received only 55,990 votes, or 8 per cent of the total, compared with 37 per cent received by the victorious Republicans. He was able to command only about one-sixth of the votes of the total membership represented in the CFL, provided his entire vote was labor. The appeal to the veterans to make a "home fit for heroes" was ignored. The Labor Party rationalized its defeat by claiming it was cheated at the polls, by the unfair treatment it received from the public press, and by the hostility shown its representatives by many local unions.

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[50] NM, March 15, 1919, p. 1, January 4, 1919, p. 12.

[51] See the City Platform of the Labor Party; NM, January, 18, 1919, p. 3; NM, February 1, 1919, p. 16.

[52] See below, pp. 185-187, for an account of the reception by local unions of NM solicitors; David Dolnick, "The Role of Labor in Chicago Politics Since 1919" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1939), pp. 4-5. The party spent $29,000 on this campaign. Harry Bird Sell, "The A. F. of L. and the Labor Party Movement of 1918-1920" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1922), pp. 81-83.

However, the Labor Party did replace the Socialists as the third party in Chicago, and Fitzpatrick concluded that the party "has established itself on the map. It has come to stay. The mayoral election," he said, "was but an incident of organization, albeit a very significant incident."[53] Obviously, the plans and hopes of the leaders had not yet been adopted by the rank and file, still Republican or Democratic on Election Day. But the leaders looked at the results as an encouraging beginning and organized at the state and national levels.

The national convention in the fall of 1919, the largest ever to be held, consisted "of 1,200 delegates representing labor union and labor party organization in thirty-three states," more than twice the number of delegates at the last AFL convention. Non-labor groups--single taxers, farmers, intellectuals, and liberals who made up the Committee of Forty-Eight--were invited.[54] Since national elections did not occur until the following year, no binding agreement was made, and these groups were asked to the next convention in 1920. In his keynote address in 1920 Fitzpatrick predicted that all the "folks against the present situation and present control" would unite, since they were already "together at heart." When this should happen, he said, "nothing can prevent the present renderers of useful service in America [from] taking the reins out of the hands

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[53] NM, April 5, 1919, p. 2; The Survey, XLII (April 12, 1919), 84.

[54] NM, December 6, 1919, p. 4; First National Convention of the Labor Party of the United States, Proceedings, November

not of American financial, but international financial, men and women," asserting that it was a simple case of "men, women and children" against "greed, gold and avarice."[55]

Attempts to ally with other political groups took place in 1920, 1922, and 1923. In 1920 the Labor Party and the Committee of Forty-Eight convened in Chicago, simultaneously but separately. The Committee of Forty-Eight was composed of Eastern liberals and businessmen, and its point of view was unofficially represented by the New Republic. There was sentiment for unification among the 48'ers as well as the Labor Party men. However, at a joint conference, the individualistic liberalism of the 48'ers clashed with the group consciousness of the labor leaders--especially over such planks as "the democratic control of industry," the Plumb Plan for governmental control of the railroads, and the nationalization of the mines. Eventually, the 48'ers joined the labor convention, bringing their basic objections to labor's platform with them to demonstrate that there could be no effective alliance with the liberals. The Labor Party was strong enough to override their complaints and to dictate the platform.[56]

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[55] NM, July 17, 1920, pp. 1, 6; "Fitzpatrick's Report to the CFL on the Convention," NM, July 24, 1920, p. 12.

[56] Ibid.; Francis Tyson, "Labor Swallows the Forty-Eighters," The Survey, XLIV (August 2, 1920, 587-588; Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1918 (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1928), pp. 382-386, 389-392 (Hereafter cited as Labor and Farmer Parties); Lincoln Colcord, "The Committee of Forty Eight," The Nation, CIX (December 27, 1919), 821-822; Kenneth C. MacKay, The Progressive Movement of 1924 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), pp. 56-58 (hereafter cited as Progressive Movement).

The amalgamation that did result from the convention in 1920 was one with progressive farmer groups, changing the name of the party to the Farmer-Labor Party of the United States. The war in Europe had increased prices for farmers' products, and at the same time it had encouraged large-scale farming which could control transportation, elevators, and credits. Consequently, the small farmers were forced to turn to defensive politics through the National Non-Partisan League, organized by Arthur Townley in Minnesota in 1915. By 1918 the League had attained majority control in one and impressive minorities in six other plains states. Encouraged by the increased production necessary for the war, conscious of their political strength and fighting corporate capital, the small farmers and the workers saw good reason to unite.[57]

In 1920 the new party nominated Parley P. Christensen for president of the United States. Fitzpatrick was nominated for Senator from Illinois. The platform consisted basically of Labor's Fourteen Points, and a vigorous endorsement of the Plumb Plan. But in the November elections Fitzpatrick polled merely 50,749 votes, and only 4,760 of these came from Cook County. In Chicago the Socialists reasserted themselves as the third party, and most of Fitzpatrick's votes presumably came from progressive miners downstate. The Farmer-Labor Party

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[57] Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties, pp. 367-368, 375; James H. Shideler, Farm Crisis, 1919-1923 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

was able to win no more than 1 per cent of the Presidential vote.[58]

The Farmer-Laborites, therefore, made a second attempt to amalgamate, this time in 1922 with the Congress for Progressive Political Action. The CPPA, organized in Chicago February 20-21, 1922, was led by William H. Johnston, president of the Machinists Union who wished to swing the labor movement behind progressive political policies. This meeting, at which Fitzpatrick represented the FLP, issued a statement recommending that all groups at the conference support candidates sympathetic to labor in the 1922 elections.[59] It did not endorse independent political action but called another meeting for December, 1922.

This conference of the CPPA was broken up when the FLP group introduced a resolution endorsing independent political action. It was also revealed that leaders of the railroad brotherhoods would discard the Plumb Plan. Fitzpatrick and Nockels, delegates to the meeting, reported that the gathering "ceased to be a conference when it adopted a set of by-laws and [a] constitution and its program for non-partisan political program then the A. F. of L. program was the one to which the

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[58] NM, June 12, 1920, p. 2, August 16, 1919, p. 1; David Delnick, "The Role of Labor in Chicago Politics Since 1919," pp. 6-7; Harry Bird Sell, "The A. F. of L. and the Labor Party Movement of 1918-1920" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1922), pp. 139-141; Eugene Staley, History of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, pp. 377-379.

[59] "Labor and Farmers Start on United Political Drive," NM, March 4, 1922, pp. 1-3, 6.

workers should give their support." Nockels commented, "If all this conference is going to do is copy the Gompers policy we might as well be with Sam and be regular."[60]

The failure to gain effective support from the farmers, the liberals of the Committee of Forty-Eight, and the CPPA led Fitzpatrick to the third attempt at amalgamation. This time the Socialists and the Workers Party were approached. On March 17, 1923, the New Majority announced that

> . . . John Fitzpatrick, member of the national Committee of the Farmer-Labor Party . . . has initiated a motion that a national convention of the party be held in Chicago, beginning July 3, and authorizing the national secretary "to invite all labor, farm and political groups" to come with authority to participate in forming a program for unity of political effort by the workers.[61]

The FLP leaders hoped that "only an Organization Committee shall be created in which the Workers Party and all other national organizations would be represented while the local unions, and central bodies would be affiliated with the existing Farmer-Labor Party."[62]

By refusing to heed friends' warnings of a Communist conspiracy to capture his party, Fitzpatrick opened himself

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[60] NM, December 23, 1922, p. 12; Labor Herald, January 23, p. 24; Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties, pp. 400-405; MacKay, Progressive Movement, pp. 60-67; Vincent P. Carosso, "The Conference for Progressive Political Action, 1922-1925" (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1944).

[61] NM, March 17, 1923, p. 1.

[62] Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the U.S., House of Representatives, 76th Congress, 1st session, H. Res. 282, appendex 1, p. 337.

to the charge, as one observer put it, that he intentionally invited the Communists to "queer the show."[63] Such a view turns Fitzpatrick's naivete into a conscious move to make his retreat from independent political action easier. A part of the naivete is evident in his ignoring evidence that his former friend and strike leader, William Z. Foster, had become a Communist. Fitzpatrick and Nockels demonstrated their faith in March, 1923, by going to Foster's defense when he was on trial for participating in a "Communist conspiracy" against the United States government. Fitzpatrick, who retained Frank Walsh as Foster's counsel, believed that Foster was the victim of anti-labor groups trying to ruin the effectiveness of an outstanding labor leader.[64] After all, during the steel strike Foster had shown his lack of interest in politics by refusing to allow strike bulletins to urge workers to join a labor party until Fitzpatrick ordered it done.[65] And contrary to the opinion of one student, Foster had not been "allocated a role" in the first years of the labor party.[66] Fitzpatrick, therefore, had no first-hand knowledge of Foster's politics. His intimacy with Fitzpatrick

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[63]Lewis L. Lorwin and Jean A. Flexner, The American Federation of Labor History, Policies and Prospects (Washington: Brookings Institute of Economics Publication No. 50, 1933), p. 223; William Z. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin (New York: International Publishers, 1937), pp. 178-180.

[64]NM, March 17, p. 3, March 24, p. 1, March 31, p. 2, April 14, 1923, p. 1; Fitzpatrick to Chicago American, March 16, 1923, Fitzpatrick Papers; Chicago Tribune, July 7, 1923.

[65]Interchurch, Steel Strike, p. 36.

came in economic, not political matters. Although he had secretly joined in 1921, Foster denied any connection with the Communist Party, and he was acquitted.[67]

The Communists packed the July convention, and the board of strategy of the Workers Party headed by Foster, C. E. Ruthenberg, and Joseph Manley was there to direct the coup. Foster had little use for Fitzpatrick's political policies; he remarked to a delegate that "the center has no guts, no program, and while I am sorry, they don't count."[68] The convention created a new party, the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, which the Communists controlled.[69] Offered a subordinate position, Fitzpatrick led the FLP out of the convention and announced his "complete refusal to have any connection with the Federated Farmer Labor Party." Foster, he said,

> . . . had come to force on our party things that the American worker will not tolerate. The Foster group did not come here as delegates, but in a conference they seized the opportunity to declare themselves delegates. . . . What they did was the same as one who, when invited to a house as a guest, seizes the host by the throat and throws him out of his own house.[70]

Afterwards, there seemed to be no basis for amalgamation

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[67] Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 322.

[68] Nathan Fine to Fitzpatrick, January 3, 1924, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[69] San Francisco Labor Unity, August 30, 1923, p. 3; New York Times, July 6, 7, 1923; John Pepper, "The First Mass Party of American Workers and Farmers," Workers Party Press Service, July 12, 1923, pp. 1-4, Buck Papers; John Pepper, "The Workers Party and the Federated," The Liberator, August, 1923, pp. 10-14.

[70] NM, July 14, 1923, p. 2; The Amalgamated Journal

with other groups. The farmers in the FLP were unable to cooperate with the workers. Labor was often skeptical of this "curious combination." The teamsters' journal observed that "the farmer wants lower costs for his labor and at the same time higher prices for his manufactured products, while Labor wants lower prices for food products and higher wages." The only way either group could profit was at the expense of the other. "No matter how one tries to make over the human family," the editorial concluded, "a certain amount of selfishness is bound to obtain."[71] The problem was whether there could be compromise in anything but the name of the party. Neither group had enough faith in the other to vote for its candidates for any office above the local level or to overcome the inherent urban-rural conflict. Another great obstacle was that labor seemed too sympathetic to communism for some farmers. One correspondent, implying that labor's program was more radical than the Non-Partisan Leagues, told Fitzpatrick, "Men who believe for a moment, that American farmers would have any part in, or sympathize with any system savoring of up-to-date socialism or 'Red' government are totally ignorant of the mental processes of American farmers."[72] The liberals of the Committee of Forty-Eight and the CPPA were too individualistic to contribute

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[71] Official Magazine International Brotherhood Teamsters Chauffeurs Stablemen & Helpers of America, March, 1924, back of front cover, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[72] Dorothy Bremmer to Fitzpatrick in NM, October 21, 1922, p. 6; E. E. Sparks to Fitzpatrick [n.d.] in ibid.

to a viable political organization, many of them objecting to independent labor politics on principle.[73] The Communists spoke in revolutionary terms, were too doctrinaire for the Labor Party men, and reeked of foreign influence. "We want political betterment for the workers and farmers, but we want control through the ballot in our own ranks and not from a dictatorship in Russia," Fitzpatrick said at the convention on July 23.[74] He had continually stressed that his was the American way of reform and that many other leaders were nationalistic in spite of their desire for a League of Workers to complement the League of Nations.[75]

At one of the first meetings of the party, Nockels had announced that the machinery of the party was ready and the leaders able so that "if it is a success it will be the work of the rank and file, if it fails it will be because the rank and file doesn't want to have its own party, or will not do the work or pay the bills."[76] The rank and file, however, were under a number of powerful political pressures. The workers in the past had been aided by the long established machines of the traditional parties, and the hold of the parties was difficult

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[73] MacKay, Progressive Movement, pp. 56-58.

[74] New York Times, July 7, 1923.

[75] Fitzpatrick refused an invitation to speak at a May Day celebration, stating that "the vast majority of American workers, both native and foreign born, resent what they regard as imported programs and they subscribe to the home-grown variety." Fitzpatrick to Edward Kasten, April 17, 1925, Fitzpatrick Papers.

to break. Often the officers of the local and internationals, who were closer to the workers under the structural system of the AFL than Fitzpatrick could hope to be, were followers of the Gompers non-partisan political policy.

It was difficult to break the old habit, the psychological compulsion of politically "rewarding and punishing." Buck explained the election of Harding as an unthinking protest vote against Democratic administration and Wilson. Did the voters think "that Harding would be less hard on labor than Wilson was or Cox would be? No. They didn't give a damn. They wanted to punish the Democrats and the only sure way . . . to hammer Wilson and the Democrat party and Cox over the head was to vote for Harding. . . ."[77] The result proved how unrewarding "punishing your enemies" could be.

In Chicago and other centers of Negro population, labor was unable to attract the Negro vote because of the traditional discrimination of trade unions against Negroes.[78] Fitzpatrick had articulated the frustrations the workers felt against industry and government, but the political program he offered to end this system attracted few votes.[79]

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[77] NM, November 6, 1920, p. 2.

[78] See Herman D. Black, "Craft Unions and the Negro in Historical Perspective," The Journal of Negro History, XLIII (January, 1958), 10-35; Bernard Mandel, "Samuel Gompers and the Negro Workers," Ibid., XL (January, 1955), 34-60.

[79] Buck writes that "we tried to enlist the elder LaFollette but he was afraid of our necessarily vague pronouncement (at that stage) for 'industrial democracy': particularly our

By 1922, workers who were at first strong supporters of the Labor Party movement felt that it was only dividing the workers, and they encouraged Fitzpatrick to readopt Gompers' political policies. One put it this way: "To Hell with anything now But Compleet Satisfaction & respect for the whole entire Labor Mouvement. No more Bull or fiddling without interest. We Might as well all hands go to the But and Play Home Sweet Home. We will have to do it later if not now."[80]

When lack of immediate success did not discourage the loyal rank and file, increasing factionalism, feuding among the leaders, and the break with the Workers Party did. One correspondent wrote Fitzpatrick the Foster group had contacted him and "that bunch is using the name of your party down here and they say too that many of your followers are officers in their party and that you hant got no party now." He observed that several officers of the FLP were officers in the Federated Farmer-Labor Party. "If this is true," he continued, "dont you think that some bodies are decevin you? . . . We dont know any more as working people what to do." There seemed to be many men in the state FLP "who ride the horse what Foster stole last July and also members of your partys national committee. Some

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demand for an increasing share in management by organized employees. One impediment we suffered was lack of time to develop a better described program during the more immediate need to check-rein what might easily become a runaway team. For example, we lost support of several New England unions because in our platform we refused to include support of a 'protective tariff.'" Buck to the author, April 15, 1963.

of us have thot that you being a labor leader for the party could help to make it a success and I thought Id write you a note hopin that you could mabe get things strait again."[81] Another worker wrote that he could not support the party when it was associating with Communists because "so help me god I saw through him [Foster] just egsactly as he has pand out."[82] When Fitzpatrick gave up his attempt at independent political action in 1924, he overlooked this justifiable confusion of the workers. Instead, he simply stated that the "rank and file have not subscribed to the program we launched and when they did not and will not there is no hope" for success.[83]

Perhaps the most demoralizing obstacle met by the labor party leaders was the opposition within their own ranks and from powerful groups within the AFL. On one occasion Jay Brown, national secretary of the party, and John H. Walker, the party's candidate for Governor of Illinois in 1920, became involved in a scheme which revealed the depth of their commitment to labor and to political action. They hoped to purchase land from a cooperative in the States of California and Washington which they thought would yield huge profits in gold, timber, and coal. They reasoned that if they could raise a little money

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[81] J. E. Lehrman to Fitzpatrick, February 1, 1924. Fitzpatrick wrote that "we had to disband our forces in Illinois so that the Communists could no longer cloak themselves under the name of the Farmer-Labor Party." Fitzpatrick to Robert La Follette, Jr., September 16, 1924, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[82] W. E. Jones to Fitzpatrick, December 9, 1923, Fitzpatrick Papers; George Swarz to Fitzpatrick, July 9, 1923, Buck Papers.

and gather partners "that would and could trust each other not to rob the sluice boxes, there are thousands of acres that could be worked and all could make a fortune." Walker suggested procedural plans, and Brown excitedly agreed that this was an opportunity of "making a good cleaning." In one exchange, Brown revealed his practical nature.

> I am not sure but what we take ourselves a little too serious and attach a little too much importance to ourselves. In any case I dont have any idea that the Farmer-Labor Party would go to the dogs if I went to the mines. Moreover, if there was a chance to make some real money in the course of a couple years does not the obligation we owe our kids demand that they be considered as well as the labor movement?[84]

The devious plan did not materialize, but this attitude among leaders meant that they would too easily compromise the rights of the workers they supposedly desired to represent.

Further evidence that state FLP leaders were slipping away from independent political action came at a meeting of the Joint Labor Legislative Board of Illinois early in 1922. The Board represented the largest labor organizations in the state and traditionally had made labor's political policy on that level. The purpose of the conference was to deal "in a practical way" with the approaching elections. Advising the FLP to stay off the ballot if there was a particularly determined enemy of labor who had to be defeated, the Board provided funds for a non-partisan campaign. One newspaper labeled the action a final retreat to the "reward your friends and punish

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[84] J. G. Brown to John Walker. August 8, 1921. August

your enemies" policy of Gompers.[85] But Buck protested that it would not force the FLP to "adopt a wibbly-wobbly political policy that will not hurt either of the two parties."[86]

By 1922 the FLP had lost all of its effectiveness in Chicago. Nockels, the most prominent trade unionist on the ticket in the November elections, received only 0.6 per cent of the votes cast for sheriff. And the Secretary-Treasurer of the party wrote Nockels in December, 1922, deprecating "the fact that the Chicago labor movement which is the parent of the Farmer-Labor Party is lagging behind other communities in support of the party to which it gave birth."[87]

The unimpressive showing at the polls, combined with Fitzpatrick's break with Foster, encouraged powerful groups within the IFL to intensify their denunciation of the party. From the outset Gompers represented the opposition. He encouraged workers to vote for candidates on the tickets of the major parties who seemed anxious to correct some of Labor's Bill of Grievances first issued in 1906. "I have read the fourteen points . . . ," Gompers wrote in 1919. "Is there any one of them of an essential character to the interests and welfare

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[85] WN, January 28, 1922, pp. 7-24; IFL Proceedings, 1922, pp. 146-151.

[86] NM, February 18, 1922, p. 3.

[87] Gifford Ernest to Nockels, December 1, 1922, in NM, December 9, 1922, p. 11. See the analysis of the 1922 election results in James H. Shideler, "The Neo-Progressives: Reform Politics in the United States, 1920-1925" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1945), pp. 110 ff; David Dolnick, "The Role of Labor in Chicago Politics Since 1919" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago,

of the working people of the United States which is not contained in the curriculum, the work and the principles of the bona fide labor movement of our country?"[88] The AFL's belated post-war reconstruction program also emphasized the similarity of ends between the national federation and the FLP. It closely resembled the fourteen points except in particulars such as its declarations for immigration restriction and against independent political action.[89] The New Majority pointed out that Gompers declared in favor of some of the goals of the Labor Party, saw them endorsed by an AFL conference, and then failed to submit them to the major parties.[90] The Labor Party men recognized this consensus on goals but continued to deplore the AFL's lack of results. One commented, "you will find every one of these [1906] grievances repeated in the protestations of the A. F. of L. convention at Atlantic City in 1919."[91]

Gompers prevented independent political action from becoming a divisive issue on the floor of the AFL conventions and then sent his lieutenants to the local level to fight the Labor Party. For example, Daniel J. Tobin, president of the teamsters and treasurer of the AFL, opposed the formation of an Indiana

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[88] Gompers, "Should a Labor Party Be Formed," American Federationist, XXVI (January, 1919), 41.

[89] "AFL Reconstruction Program," American Federationist, XXVI (February, 1919), 133.

[90] NM, May 15, 1920, p. 1; March 11, 1922, p. 4; May 29, 1920, p. 4; June 19, 1920, p. 2.

[91] NM, February 28, 1920, p. 4.

Labor Party at its organizational convention. Contradicting himself, he said that he was "an American first and a trade unionist second," and that he had "no affiliation with any political party that is not endorsed by the American Federation of Labor." He pointed to Fitzpatrick's defeat in the mayoral election in Chicago, denied that there was strong sentiment for a labor party among the rank and file, and concluded that "unless I agree with every hair-brained agitator I am called unrepresentative."[92]

Gompers telegraphed the Indiana convention that "the effect of a separate political labor party can only be disastrous to the wage earners of our country," warning that "there can be no hope for success of labor party candidates." The AFL, according to its president, "rejects and repudiates the fallacies of blind theorists and will have nothing to do with those treacherous follies that are suited only to the purposes of labor's enemies."[93] Fitzpatrick was neither a theorist nor a traitor. After warning Fitzpatrick against participating in a Labor Party movement, Gompers wrote, "It is hoped that we shall live at least until after the close of the coming campaign [1920] when we, too, may be in a position to compare notes as to who will have the excuses and regrets to feel and express." Commenting on Gompers' tactics, Fitzpatrick said "The A. F. of L. is trying to scare everyone to death who dares

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[92] NM, February 28, 1920, p. 2.

[93] Ibid.

to rise up and oppose its political ideas."[94]

Pressure was applied on local officers. In Illinois, Gompers and other AFL officers reminded John Walker that he had obligations to the AFL stemming from his position within its structure as well as from certain personal favors that had been done for him.[95] Often the desires of large numbers of local officers and members were overlooked. For example, even though the United Mine Workers' convention endorsed the Labor Party, the international officers supported Gompers' non-partisan policy at the AFL's conference in December, 1919.[96]

After Foster's departure to the Communists, it was possible to identify independent political action with communism. This theme was part of the general denunciation of Foster at the convention in 1923. Gompers set the tone, declaring that "the attempt to force by declaration of power the unions to do that against which their own true and best instincts prompt them is an invasion which cannot be tolerated." The issue came to a head when delegates from the CFL introduced a resolution for independent political action. John Walker and Victor Olander led the fight against it, and Foster was its major defender. Foster's defeat was assured when a conservative delegate from

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[94]Gompers to Fitzpatrick, March 16, 1920, in NM, March 27, 1920, pp. 1-2; ibid., p. 2.

[95]Buck to the author, April 15, 1963; see correspondence of Gompers and an Indiana Labor Party sympathizer in American Federationist, XXVII (May, 1920), 436-438.

[96]AFL Proceedings, 1920, p. 63.

the CFL announced that Fitzpatrick had actually opposed the measure as introduced into the CFL. There is no evidence Fitzpatrick did so. After a bitter debate the measure was voted down, 465 to 65. The CFL accepted the IFL report by a vote of 112 to 16 and asked Foster to "tear up his union card and bore from outside." Foster observed that now the groups on the left definitely had a reason for existence because "our [labor] leaders are abandoning these big issues and leaving it to the radicals to fight them through."[97]

With the failure of the rank-and-file unionist and various non-union groups to back him, Fitzpatrick no longer had a basis of support for his political policies. He could go no further and stay within the mainstream of the labor movement. He undoubtedly would have been forced to abandon his position in the CFL had he maintained his stand, and "there was an organized group of labor men in the Windy City ready to step in if Fitzpatrick stepped out of his union office."[98] A friend reminded him, "You once told me that when you came up against a stone wall you did not buck your head and have it smashed but figured out how you can get around the situation."[99] To Fitzpatrick, the only way to get around this situation was to withdraw his support from the Labor Party movement. He did not leave the party immediately. His membership card shows that

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[97] IFL Proceedings, 1923, pp. 269-270, 313-314, 338, 347, 353; NM, October 13, 1923, p. 1; FN, September 13, 1924, pp. 1-2, January 3, 1925, p. 6.

[98] Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties, p. 434.

[99] Nathan Fine to Fitzpatrick, January 2, 1924, Fitzpatrick

he paid dues until December, 1923 and that his wife paid dues until March, 1924. But he never involved himself in party affairs after July, 1923. In a two-day conference, Buck and others helped convince Fitzpatrick that his primary duty was to organized labor and that he was jeopardizing this by his continued membership in the party.[100] The fact was clear that by May, 1924, there was little of the party left, for Fitzpatrick received an audit of the FLP books that showed an insignificant $117.22 on hand for the 1924 campaign.[101] Fitzpatrick did not consider the AFL's support of Robert La Follette's Progressive Party in 1924 a victory, and he gave it only token support. In September, 1924, Buck wrote Fitzpatrick, "The only existing political movement that I believe in is the one that has been more or less gently put to sleep." He was

> . . . just as fond of La Follette as I ever was and admire him as a fighter. . . . I don't believe in the central theory of his platform, which is that monopoly must be broken up. I see that Frank Walsh gives, as one reason for supporting him, that 21 of his 36 planks have been written into law, even while he has been damned for advocating them. If the writing of three fifths of his program into law has done no more than seems apparent for this people, what is the use of carrying on to get the remaining two fifths. I don't see that his program means anything and I think that if any "third" party comes of his campaign, it will be only indeed a "third" party and not a labor party.[102]

Since it was primarily the labor conservatives who supported La Follette in 1924, the Labor Party men, defeated by the AFL, could not follow them.

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[100]Buck to author, April 15, 1963.

[101]Buck, et al. to Fitzpatrick, May 21, 1924, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[102]Buck to Fitzpatrick, September 6, 1924, Fitzpatrick

In view of this virtual collapse, Fitzpatrick recommended on May 18, 1924, that the CFL give up its support of an independent labor party and return to a non-partisan policy. He stated that "possibly the greatest opportunity for the workers and farmers to more effectively establish their own political party is upon us now." However, jealousy, feuding, and selfishness among those who would profit most had made it impossible to unite. Therefore, he concluded, "We cast our lot with the American Federation of Labor."[103] After he had abandoned the Party, Fitzpatrick received personal appeals to endorse various presidential candidates,[104] but aside from working with Labor's Non-Partisan Committee to elect Franklin Roosevelt in 1936, he was never again active in anything resembling independent political action. When asked to reverse his stand in 1928, he wrote "that for years we have been training our affiliated unions and their respective memberships to the belief that partisan politics are taboo in our movement and now to reverse ourselves, no matter on what basis, would react against us and stultify us."[105]

Fitzpatrick had three discernible political goals. First, he wished to utilize politics to win a greater share of America's prosperity for all disinherited groups. Second, he hoped to

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[103] NM, May 24, 1924, pp. 12-13.

[104] Seth Brown to Fitzpatrick, April 2, 1924, April 3, 1924; Frank Walsh to Fitzpatrick, June 6, 1924, Fitzpatrick Papers.

[105] Fitzpatrick to Tom Mooney, July 20, 1938, Mooney Papers.

prevent the major parties from exploiting the labor vote. He desired to prevent such offers as Gompers presented to Harding after the election of 1920: ". . . in any way that the American labor movement, including myself, can be of service, it will of course, be our duty and our pleasure."[106] Finally, Fitzpatrick hoped to realize his first two goals by institutionalizing independent labor politics with the support of the AFL. His purpose was to make the Labor Party the political wing of the national federation.

> Fitzpatrick believed that unionists could organize a Labor Party outside of, but parallel to, the labor movement. He felt that it could be more effective than what Gompers deemed to be nonpartisanship; that it would minimize party-politico rivalries in unions, lessening resultant risk of divided ranks; and (perhaps near the core of his inmost thinking), it should not so easily stultify labor union officers who, under the Gompers plan, too often supported tawdry politicians because the latter took pains to line up behind one or two, but not the whole program of, bills proposed, or endorsed by organized labor.[107]

Fitzpatrick never considered himself a Socialist. He emphasized a change of personnel, efficient administration in government,

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[106] NM, November 13, 1920, p. 9.

[107] Buck to author, April 1, 1963. Buck wrote that "the following is the only mention of politics in the Constitution of the A. F. of L.: 'Article III.--Convention, Section 8. Party politics, whether they be Democratic, Republican, Socialistic, Populistic, Prohibition or any other shall have no place in the conventions of the American Federation of Labor.' It does not forbid participation in Labor Party politics by state federations, or local bodies, or national or international unions, or local unions, or the members of any of these. It does just what it says it does--keeps party politics off the floor of A. F. of L. conventions. The representatives of the Labor Party have made no attempt to get Labor Party politics onto the floor of the A. F. of L. conventions and do not intend to attempt to do so. Neither do they need to do so." NM, April 17, 1920, p. 12.

and the moderate nature of his other reforms. In the AFL, however, he was not as interested in a change of personnel as he was in influencing the philosophy of the officers. Thus, he maintained that he was acting within the constitution of the AFL, forming a legitimate opposition, and was never conducting a dual organization.

His goals posed a dilemma which has been constant for independent labor politics in the United States. His humanitarianism meant that he would be attracted to a wide range of groups with varied political goals. However, any dispersion of forces would make it easier for labor men to argue purely and simply that he was prostituting their interests to others. If Fitzpatrick were to realize his first two aims, he had to establish independent labor politics permanently with the assistance of the AFL. There were two ways to obtain this cooperation. Fitzpatrick had either to influence the unions to replace Gompers' machine with one sympathetic to a labor party, or he had to win enough support for the party from the rank and file unionists, unorganized workers, and other reform-minded political groups to use as leverage in forcing the existing AFL hierarchy to adopt to the new philosophy.

Fitzpatrick and his associates never planned to overthrow Gompers, in spite of reports to the contrary.[108] There were many

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[108]The New York Times referred to the Labor Party men as "Gompers haters." July 16, 1920. During the period of greatest reform agitation, however, it was observed that "the strongest and most promising men in the labor movement [the writer referred primarily to Fitzpatrick] refuse to concern themselves with Feder-

opportunities during the height of the labor party agitation to attempt to separate Gompers from his cherished office, but Fitzpatrick never tried. A resolution was introduced into the IFL convention of 1920 to "condemn the policy of the president of the American Federation of Labor to 'reward your friends and punish your enemies on the political field,'" but even the militant Nockels opposed it because "the resolution . . . attacks Gompers. I do not think Gompers is responsible for the action he has taken; he is responsible for carrying out the instructions of the American Federation of Labor, . . . that he support a non partisan political program. . . ." The astute conservative secretary of the IFL, Victor Olander, stressed that "the convention did not vote to condemn President Gompers. I hope," he said, "the press will make that clear when their report is sent out."[109] The Labor Party men wished only to bring enough pressure to bear to force Gompers to adopt what they considered a more realistic program.

On at least one occasion Fitzpatrick suggested a conference between the Non-Partisan Political Campaign Committee of the AFL and the representatives of the CFL "to discuss and develop a program for Chicago in accordance with the requirements of the A. F. of L."[110] Gompers viewed this proposal as a

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[109] IFL Proceedings, October, 1920, pp. 139, 144-145. At the July 3, 1923 convention, one delegate stated, "Everybody, including John Fitzpatrick, knows that Sam Gompers is plotting against the Chicago Federation of Labor right now." Fitzpatrick retorted, "I don't know it. . . ." Chicago Tribune, July 7, 1923.

[110] [illegible] 2, 1920, p. 12

submission to his demands, but in reality it was an attempt to realize Fitzpatrick's goal of institutionalizing a labor party, at least at the local level, through bargaining. Fitzpatrick needed impressive support both within and without the AFL in order to win his demands in this way. To reach the organized workers within the AFL, Fitzpatrick had to spread his message to an organization controlled by hostile leaders. It was necessary to exercise some control over the communications system of the unions and to get a hearing in the labor journals. He could not because the central office of each union controlled all correspondence as well as the editorial policy of the publications. This control prevailed in reference to all the publications of the national federation and Fitzpatrick's own union. The New Majority had much too small a circulation to be an adequate substitute, and The Federated Press and radio station, WCFL, were organized too late to be of value.

In order to be effective at the national level, Fitzpatrick needed an even wider base of support than the AFL could provide. For instance this help might have come from the workers in the large unorganized mass-production industries, such as steel, and at the time of the Chicago mayoral contest of 1919 there was a possibility that they would be organized. Had they been, the outcome of Labor Party elections might have been different. But since their disillusioning defeat late in 1919, these men remained unorganized and were almost impossible for Fitzpatrick to reach. As the Congress of Industrial Organizations was to demonstrate in the 1930's, political and economic

organization went hand in hand, for the national union communications system could then be used for political propaganda. The defeat of the steel strike and the collapse of organization in the stockyards were important events in the defeat of the Labor Party. There was still the possibility of drawing support from some sympathetic union men and unorganized workers and then amalgamating with non-labor political groups. The failure of amalgamation demonstrated its unavoidable weakness. One Labor Party official expressed the unrealistic hopes of the amalgamation advocates before the CPPA met in Cleveland. He noted that "the F. L. P. is in a strategic position to take the lead when the conference convenes. All of the other groups have a lot of grievances against each other. We have no quarrels with others; others have no quarrels with us. The matter of leadership falls naturally to our Party." Fitzpatrick and his followers mistakenl believed this, and it was not until after the disastrous convention of July, 1923, that Buck endorsed "the judgement of those who have continually held that the party must first build itself into a position of self-reliant strength before the time will have come for amalgamation."[111] Fitzpatrick revealed how difficult he found cooperation with other groups in 1922 when a motion was made for the FLP to vote for a Socialist lawyer as mayor of Chicago. "If another party nominated a union man," Fitzpatrick stated, "I would vote for the Union man in preference to any

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[111] Buck, "The F.L.P. Convention," NM, July 21, 1923, pp. 4-5; J. G. Brown to John Walker, September 9, 1921, Walker Papers.

other candidate."[112] This selfish outlook was equally true of those parties with whom Fitzpatrick attempted to amalgamate.

The immediate motivation for amalgamation was defeat, defeats in the mayoral election in 1919, in national elections in 1920 and 1922, as well as in the meat-packing and steel-industry organizational drives. Fitzpatrick was aligned with non-labor elements out of weakness. He could not rally sufficient labor support to his banner. Unsuccessful attempts to amalgamate with diverse groups exposed Fitzpatrick to attacks by the Socialists and the Communists because he allegedly represented the "shilly shally"[113] center and by the AFL conservatives on the right because he was supposedly conducting a non-labor political organization under a foreign ideology. He was caught between the extremes engaged in a battle which he might have exploited had his position been stronger. As it was, he was forced to abandon his progressive political program.

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[112]Fitzpatrick to Morris Yusem, February 6, 1923, Fitzpatrick Papers. Buck writes that "neither Fitz nor any of the rest of us were for a Farmer-Labor Party in 1918. We started a Labor Party." Buck to author, February 1, 1963.

[113]The phrase is John Pepper's. See "The First Mass Party of American Workers and Farmers," Workers Party Press Service, July 12, 1923, p. 2, Buck Papers.